

## Iran reiterates 'right in Gulf'

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's navy commander reiterated Sunday that his country claimed the right to inspect ships in the Gulf, despite the ceasefire in the war with Iraq. "We will continue to exercise our rights in the waters of Persian Gulf and the Hormuz Strait and, according to international regulations, the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq does not hinder the exercise of these rights," Tehran Radio quoted Rear-Admiral Mohammad Hosein Malekzadeh as saying. During the eight-year war Iranian naval patrols frequently inspected tankers and cargo ships in search of war material bound for Iraq. A ceasefire ended fighting last August. The reported last challenge to shipping was Dec. 12 when Iranian gunboats intercepted a British supertanker, the 270,000-tonne British Trident, in international waters. Gulf shipping sources said the tanker was bound for the Iranian terminal at Sirri Island and the incident appeared to be a misunderstanding. Malekzadeh also said his force was ready to clear the Shatt Al Arab waterway on the southern border with Iraq of mines and explosives once agreement on this was reached in U.N.-sponsored peace talks.

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## AROUND THE WORLD...

### Arabsat faces problem over Egypt

NICOSIA (R) — The main problem facing the Arab League's space agency Arabsat is Egypt's absence, a Saudi minister was quoted Sunday as saying. Alawi Darwish Kayyal, minister of posts, telegraphs and telephones, told the Qatari daily Al Raya that Arabsat had lost between 25 and 45 per cent of its income because of Egypt's suspension from the Arab League. Asked about the status of Egypt's membership of the space agency, he said without elaborating: "There are certain measures which will be implemented for its return to Arabsat." Arabsat has three French-made satellites in orbit controlled from Saudi Arabia and Tunisia for television and telephone services. It plans to launch a second generation of satellites in 1992. Kayyal also said he believed Saudi Arabia had succeeded in limiting what he called the possible dangers from Israel's first home-produced satellite, launched in September. Israel said the Ofek-1 satellite was for technological and scientific projects, but Western European space experts said its main mission would be to spy on the Arab World.

### Journalist jailed under Zia to head APP

ISLAMABAD (R) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Sunday named a journalist jailed under the former military regime to head Pakistan's state news agency. Aslam Sheikh was appointed director-general of the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP). He replaces Farooq Nisar, who held the post for four and a half years as a nominee of late President Mohammad Zia Ul Haq. Mohammad Afzal Khan, a senior APP journalist, was named the news agency's second in command; a government statement said. Sheikh and Afzal Khan are leading members of Pakistan's Federal Union of Journalists. Both men were jailed by Zia's martial law government during a union campaign for press freedom. APP said the changes were part of a process of democratisation of the media initiated by Bhutto's government.

### Iran backs Afghan rebels in Soviet talks

NICOSIA (R) — The start of talks between the Soviet Union and Afghan guerrillas represents a victory for the Mujahideen, Iranian President Ali Khamenei was quoted Sunday as saying. Tehran Radio said he told Mowlawi Nasrollah Mansouri, a Pakistan-based Mujahideen leader, Saturday that Iran had previously rejected negotiations on the Afghan conflict with other parties. "But we support the recent talks between the Mujahideen and Soviet officials, in which the Mujahideen take part as representatives of the people of their country, and see this as a victory for all the Mujahideen in trenches inside Afghanistan," Khamenei said.

### Fourth youth dies in U.S. explosives accident

WASHINGTON (R) — A fourth youth has died after a pipe bomb exploded while teenagers were building it Saturday in the garage at the home of a Brazilian diplomat, police said Sunday. Police said the teenagers had been experimenting with explosives at the home of embassy counsellor Vera Machado in Bethesda, Maryland, a suburb of Washington. Machado's 15-year-old son Gustavo was one of the dead, police said. One American teenager died instantly and two others — one American and one Brazilian — died later in hospital. Machado and her husband were asleep at the time. The Washington Post quoted the girlfriend of one of the teenagers as saying the boys, described as intelligent and science-oriented, had a keen interest in explosives. Her boyfriend told her they could make a better bomb than the one that caused the crash of a Pan American airliner in Scotland December 21, killing 270 people.

### Scholars urge militants to renounce violence

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's top Muslim clergymen, acting after a government appeal for help to end growing fundamentalist violence, urged hardliners Sunday to renounce force as anti-Islamic. The call by a group of top theologians at Al Azhar, the oldest seat of the Islamic learning, followed a month of violent incidents involving Muslim militants. "Islam decisively rejects violence, coercion or violation of the rights of others in the name of religion," they said in a statement appealing for dialogue and persuasion rather than force. About 10,000 people packed the 1,000-year-old Al Azhar Mosque and thousands more stood outside to hear the statement read by Egypt's leading Muslim scholar, Mohammad Metwalli Al Sharawi. Newspapers have said clandestine groups of fundamentalists, who regard most music, television shows and dancing as blasphemous, are trying to enforce strict Islamic laws in at least one Cairo district and some towns in Upper Egypt.

### Thatcher praises other women leaders

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who in 1979 made history as Europe's first woman prime minister, noted Sunday she is not alone and joked that male politicians may one day come back into fashion. "We're getting more women prime ministers," she said in a television interview, referring to the recent election of Benazir Bhutto as prime minister of Pakistan. "And don't forget... Mrs. Gandhi was a very able, charming, formidable prime minister of India." Thatcher now is the longest-serving leader in the West. Before she came to power, women had already governed in Sri Lanka and Israel. Part of the British leader's tenure in office coincided with that of Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1944. "I think male prime ministers one day will come back into fashion," she joked with interviewer David Frost on Britain's Commercial TV-AM channel.

### Bomb blast kills five in Punjab

AMRITSAR (AP) — A bomb blast at a Hindu temple killed at least five Sunday, the year's first victims of continuing Sikh militant violence in India's troubled northwestern Punjab state. At least 20 others were injured in the explosion that occurred when Hindus were praying at the shrine in Chawinda Dahi town, 32 kilometres east of Amritsar, police and news reports said. Elsewhere in Punjab, at least four others were killed Sunday in Sikh militant violence, Press Trust of India news agency said. According to Chaman Pal Singh, inspector general of police for Amritsar district where the bomb blast occurred, the explosives were kept in a cloth bag on a bicycle within the temple precincts. The blast killed five people on the spot, while 20 others were injured and removed to hospital.

### Soviet paper salutes changes

MOSCOW (R) — The newspaper Izvestia said goodbye to 1988 without regrets Sunday, saying it was not hard to give up one-candidate elections, jammed radio shows and other former staples of Soviet life that were abolished last year. But the government newspaper toasted many changes made during 1988, including the improvement in supplies at liquor stores — after the Kremlin realised its crackdown on alcohol had created a massive network of moonshine distillers. "Let's raise our glasses to it (1988), because among other things it helped us get rid of the queues for this holiday drink," Izvestia's correspondent Yuri Makarov wrote in a rare bit of levity published in the central Soviet press. The article was headlined "Congratulations on the old year." Reviewing the events of 1988, Izvestia said goodbye to West German daredevil pilot Mathias Rust, who was allowed to return home in August after serving 14 months of a four-year sentence for making an unauthorised flight to Red Square. "Auf Wiedersehen Mathias Rust, madcap inspector of our anti-aircraft defences," Izvestia said.



A scene from the devastated town of Lockerbie, Scotland, in the aftermath of the Dec. 21 crash of a Pan Am Boeing (Sygma photo)

## Arafat said to have vowed to hunt down Pan Am bombers

LONDON (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has vowed to hunt down those who caused the crash of a Pan Am airliner in Scotland killing 270 people, according to British newspaper. The Sunday Telegraph said the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman planned to conduct an investigation into Palestinian splinter groups suspected of planting a bomb on board the plane. It added that he had agreed to cooperate with U.S. intelligence agencies and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The paper quoted an unnamed U.S. official as saying: "Arafat has extremely good intelligence about the Palestinian groups. He has vowed to help track down the terrorists and we think this help could be vital."

The Sunday Express said Arafat had vowed to send a squad to find whoever planned the attack on the plane. The New York-bound aircraft, a Boeing 747 of Pan American Airways, crashed on the small Scottish town of Lockerbie Dec. 21 less than an hour after it took off from London. The PLO sent a message to President Reagan from its Tunis headquarters pledging "a traitor's death" for the Pan Am bomber if it found him first, the Sunday Express said. Two weeks ago the United States resumed contacts with the PLO after Arafat renounced terrorism and recognised Israel. Responsibility for the bombing has been claimed by a pro-Iranian group, the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, but the Iranian government has denied involvement. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher distanced herself Sunday from U.S. calls for retaliation against those who planted the bomb on Pan Am Flight 103, saying there should be no "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" revenge. "I don't think an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth is ever valid," she said in a wide-ranging New Year's television interview. "The most important thing to do is to try to get the cooperation of all nations to track these people down so that they are brought to justice," she said on the "David Frost on Sunday" programme on TV-Am, a commercial television channel. The danger of revenge, she said, is that "it can affect innocent people."

## Armenian KGB threatened with 'mass terror' ultimatum

MOSCOW (R) — An ultimatum threatening "mass terror" if jailed members of a group fighting over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh are not freed has been sent to the KGB security police in Armenia, the newspaper Kommunist said. The ultimatum, printed in Wednesday's edition of the Armenian communist daily, claimed to be armed with "Stinger" missiles used by rebels fighting Afghanistan's Soviet-backed government. The paper reached Moscow Sunday.

The paper also carried an attack by the republic's Communist Party on Armenian radio, the official news agency Armenpress and many newspapers for not quelling nationalist passions which have raged for more than nine months over the Azerbaijani territory. To emphasise the gravity of the situation, the newspaper published beside it a photograph showing at least 40 home-made grenades which it said were only part of caches seized in the republic. Several members of the Karabakh committee were arrested this month and others went into hiding after the Dec. 7 quake. The official media have accused the banned group of spreading false rumours in the wake of the disaster in order to incite passions among the population.

Kommunist said it was not clear whether the ultimatum, which elapsed on the evening of Dec. 23, was a genuine threat or pure "hoaxing". However, its publication in the republic's most authoritative newspaper suggested it was being taken seriously amid continuing unrest over Nagorno-Karabakh despite this month's devastating Armenian earthquake.

The ultimatum said: "We demand the immediate release of the leaders of the Karabakh committee and all political prisoners." "We give you 24 hours to think it over. Otherwise we will turn to mass terror. We will not set a time or place. We are armed with Stinger missiles delivered to us by our friends."

The Karabakh committee was again criticised for fanning nationalist passions by a meeting of the ruling politburo of the Armenian Communist Party, details of which were published in the same edition of Kommunist. The republic's leadership criticised large sections of the local media for their handling of the crisis which blew up over demands by Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian majority for the enclave to be shifted from Azerbaijan to Armenian control. Armenian radio and Armenpress were reprimanded for publishing material which did not help calm the situation, while the editor of an educational newspaper was accused of inciting people to take part in demonstrations. A long string of other named newspapers also came under fire for failing to do enough to promote a change of the atmosphere over Nagorno-Karabakh. According to official figures, sixty people have died since the dispute first erupted into violence 10 months ago.

## Israelis expel 13 Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Israeli occupation authorities Sunday expelled to Lebanon 13 Palestinians suspected of leadership in the anti-Israeli revolt, culminating a bloody weekend in which six Palestinians were shot to death in clashes.

Two other Palestinians agreed to leave voluntarily after striking a deal with the authorities. The army said the two would be allowed to return to their homes in the occupied territories if they went into exile for five years and refrained from anti-Israeli activities during that time. Seven of the Palestinians expelled Sunday were from the occupied West Bank, and six were from the southern occupied Gaza Strip, a military spokesman said. The expulsions brought the number of Palestinians expelled since the beginning of the uprising to 49. The 13 were taken by helicopter to Zuhriya checkpoint at the northern edge of Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon and were then driven in Lebanese vehicles towards Syrian positions in the Bekaa Valley. Sources quoted by Reuters said. Sources identified the 13 as: Massoud Za'fer, 42, from Nabhus; Hanni Haloub, 28, (Tulkarem); Abdul Hamid Baba, 25, (Al Amari refugee camp); Othman Mohammad Daoud, 27, (Qalqilya); Yousef Harb Odeh, age not disclosed, (Balata refugee camp); Issam Daba'i, 24, (Nabhus); Jamal Faraj, 25, (Diheishe refugee camp); Sayed Baraka, 32, (Bani Subeila, Gaza Strip); Abdallah Abu Samahadana, 38, (Gaza); Fathi Hajaj, 36, (Jahalya refugee camp); Rizk Bayari, 29, (Gaza); Ayesb Abu Saadeb, 30, (Jahalya); and Munim Abu Antiyeb, 33, (Gaza). The two men who agreed to leave voluntarily were identified as Nabil Mohammad Tamous, a 21-year-old activist from Gaza, and Ata Abu Kirsib, 54, of Shati refugee camp in Gaza.

## Egypt urges Israel to respond positively to PLO peace moves

CAIRO (Agencies) — An Egyptian minister said in remarks published Sunday that Israel was imposing a state of cold peace in relations with Egypt by failing to respond to Palestinian peace moves. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali said he hoped Israel would take a positive part in efforts to end suffering, wars, destruction and instability in the region. "Egypt sees that Palestinians have clearly and undoubtedly chosen peace and coexistence while the Israelis could not make a clear choice between war and peace," Ghali told the Middle East News Agency.

"Israel's failure to respond to the Palestinian hand extended in peace imposes an atmosphere of cold peace on Israeli-Egyptian ties because of the failure to achieve the essential goal — a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian cause." Cairo, citing the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) recognition of Israel's right to exist, has urged the Zionist state to attend an international conference on Middle East peace. The PLO will form a five-member delegation to visit the United States, the PLO's radio station said Saturday. The Voice of Palestine, in a broadcast from Algiers monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, quoted an unnamed high-ranking Palestinian source as saying the PLO Executive Committee had asked Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department, and Mahmoud Abbas, head of pan-Arab and international relations, to set up the delegation. Its members would be Palestinians "who have political and legal qualifications to visit the USA," it said. Their mission would be confirmed to explaining the developments and background of the Palestinian cause and the uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to American public opinion, the radio quoted the source as saying. Members of the delegation would work as roving ambassadors in the United States and would be mandated to talk on behalf of the PLO with any U.S. officials.

## 1,500 killed in Lebanon in 1988

BEIRUT (R) — Nearly 1,500 people died violently in Lebanon in 1988 despite a civil war lull, according to police, militia and hospital sources. The death toll, compared with an estimated 1,415 in 1987, came in a year when the country's worst political crisis paralysed government but direct rightist-leftist clashes were few. At least 580 people were killed in a series of inconclusive battles between Lebanese militias for control of the Shi'ite Muslim community in the south and Beirut's southern suburbs, the sources said. A further 96 people, including about 50 guerrillas, died in Israeli air strikes and raids on Palestinian and Lebanese targets. Sixteen Israeli soldiers and 29 SLA militiamen were reported killed in clashes with guerrillas, the sources said. Attackers opposed to Syria's military presence in Lebanon, killed 12 Syrian soldiers. Car bomb blasts killed 115 people while gunmen killed two Westerners — a Frenchman and a Belgian — in Beirut. Thirteen people were killed in fighting across the green line battle zone which has divided Beirut since the start of the civil war in 1975. Three Amal officials were killed in September. Palestinian guerrillas ousted fighters loyal to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat from two refugee camps in June. At least 111 Palestinians were killed. Four people died in sporadic conflicts between Amal and Palestinian forces near the southern port of Sidon and seven were killed in a Palestinian power struggle in the 'Ain Al Hilweh refugee camp. Gunfights in east Beirut between loyalists of President Amine Gemayel, who ended his term in September, and the bardian Lebanese Forces militia killed seven people. Police said they attributed another 265 deaths to intermittent factional fighting, random violence and crime. Militias in Beirut said they put eight people to death for alleged crimes and 13 people were killed in two days of clashes in north Lebanon.

## Festivities around the world; catastrophe hits Rio, Manila

NEW YORK (Agencies) — New Year's revelers gathered happily in places such as London's Trafalgar Square, a Tokyo stadium and New York City's neon-lit Times Square, but catastrophe stalked the festivities in Rio de Janeiro and Manila.

An overcrowded cruise vessel on its way to view Rio's famous Copacabana beach fireworks collided with a private yacht, killing at least 42 people. In the Philippines, illegal fireworks set off in the revelries killed 11 people, injured hundreds and sparked fires that left thousands homeless. In Peru, nearly half of the capital of Lima held its parties in the dark as a blackout hit the city for the second consecutive

New Year's eve. Leftist guerrillas were blamed for the previous outrage, but the state power company did not immediately ascribe responsibility for the latest one.

Presidents Ronald Reagan of the United States and Mikhail S. Gorbachev of the Soviet Union sent New Year's messages to each other Saturday, hoping for still more progress in U.S.-Soviet relations. Polish leader Wojciech Jaruzelski said talks with the opposition were "ever more urgent," and South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo looked towards better ties with communist North Korea. As Big Ben struck midnight, an estimated 100,000 New Year's revelers jammed Trafalgar Square Sunday to ring in

1989, police said. Scotland Yard said the turnout was the largest since a violent New Year's celebration six years ago, when two women were killed in a surging crowd in the central London square, the traditional focal point of celebrations for Londoners.

In the Vatican, Pope John Paul marked the Roman Catholic Church's World Day of Peace and prayed that 1989 would be year of justice, solidarity and greater respect for the rights of ethnic minorities. Government troops and communist rebels in the Philippines observed a truce but 11 people were killed and 2,000 injured in firecracker blasts, stabbings and shootings during New Year revelry, officials

said. More than 14,000 people were reported to have lost their homes in Manila in fires started by firecrackers.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in a television interview, praised Gorbachev for his "great vision and boldness and courage." "If he gets through with his reforms the world is a safer place. If he gets through with his reforms the cold war is at an end," she said. In Japan, as thousands thronged to shrines to usher in the New Year, thousands of teenagers welcomed 1989 by singing and dancing to the music of U.S. rock bands at a concert in downtown Tokyo Saturday.

About 51,000 young Japanese people packed the Big Egg stadium for the seven-hour show featuring Bon Jovi, Britany Fox, Kingdom Come and Ratt.

Thousands packed Times Square for the traditional New Year's countdown as 272-kilogram wrought-iron ball descended a pole at Times Square to mark the New Year. Arlindo Pubarao, a radio operator for the sea rescue service of the Rio de Janeiro state fire department, said "a lot of people went to the bottom" in the collision of the yacht and the cruise ship Bateau Mouche. Irineu Barroso, the chief of Rio's 10th police precinct, said

42 people died. He said he had no information on the numbers of injuries and those rescued. "It seems there was an excess of passengers, maybe 130 to 150 (on board)," Barroso said.

The cruise boat Bateau Mouche has a capacity of about 100, a local radio station said. "We understand the boat was told to turn back, but ignored the order," Barroso said. Pubarao said the Bateau Mouche and the private yacht Casa Branca collided, and there were victims from both vessels. He did not give further details, and said rescue officials were still out in the choppy seas, giving rescue operations.



## Sudan marks independence day embroiled in crisis

**KHARTOUM (R)** — Sudan marked the 33rd anniversary of its independence Sunday embroiled in a political crisis and faced with continuing civil war in the famine-hit south.

Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi, whose coalition was rocked by three days of violent street protests and a general strike last week, said in an independence day speech his government planned to carry out a wide range of political reforms.

"We hope to plug the gaps and build on the strong points and proceed to the next stage of the democratic process — general elections that we hope will strengthen democracy," he said.

Mahdi did not make clear whether he was referring to elections due next year or to a snap election, but he said: "People should learn from their mistakes and experiences."

The latest unrest, in which at least one person was killed and scores were injured, was sparked by a government decision last Monday to raise prices, by 500 per cent in the case of sugar.

The government backed down and rescinded the increases three days later after protests had spread to most major provincial towns.

Members of Mahdi's Umma Party claimed foreign powers had incited the violence while unconfirmed rumours circulated that the military, which has taken power in Sudan three times since independence in 1956 from

Anglo-Egyptian rule, might intervene.

General Mahdi Babu Nimr, the chief of staff, told the independent newspaper Al Ushu that army commanders had held extensive meetings to ensure the country's security. He vowed that the military would continue to protect democratic rule.

The authorities said last month they had uncovered a plot to overthrow the government led by retired army officers and politicians who had served under President Jaafar Numeiri. Numeiri, ousted in a 1985 military coup, now lives in Egypt.

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), a key partner in Mahdi's coalition, quit the government last week in protest at the price rises and the government's failure to adopt a peace pact it reached last month with rebels in south Sudan.

Rebel leader John Garang of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), whose estimated 40,000 men have been fighting troops since 1983, said peace prospects for 1989 were dim.

"It had hoped 1989 would be a year of peace, but prospects appear bleak," he said in a radio broadcast Saturday.

The fighting has forced millions of southerners from their homes

and created a famine in which tens of thousands died last year.

Western and Arab diplomats said the DUP's departure from the government made an early settlement of the conflict unlikely. They also predicted that Libya might become increasingly involved in the fighting.

The DUP, which has a strong pro-Egyptian faction, blocked a unity pact last year between Sudan and Libya.

Sid Ahmed Khalifa, editor of the pro-Umma Al Watan newspaper, wrote Sunday that Libyan aircraft had raided SPLA positions preventing major southern towns falling into rebel hands and prompting the rejection of the SPLA-DUP pact.

Hassan Al Tourabi, leader of the co-ruling National Islamic Front (NIF), was quoted as saying the government would seek a vote of confidence when parliament reconvened, possibly next week.

There was controversy over whether head of state Ahmad Ali Mirghani would resign following the DUP's withdrawal from government. He is the only DUP member on the five-man supreme council which acts as a joint and largely ceremonial presidency.

Sawt Al Umma, mouthpiece of Mahdi's Umma Party, said the prime minister had sought Mirghani's resignation. But Mirghani was quoted as saying he was a symbol of Sudanese people and did not represent the DUP as head of state.

## Lebanon greets New Year with fresh violence

**BEIRUT (R)** — The New Year in Lebanon opened to the sound of exploding shells and machinegun fire echoing across Beirut southern suburbs as militiamen clashed.

Police said fighters of Hizbollah (Party of God) and Amal militiamen fought in Hay Madi, Hajjaj and Chiyah, suburbs that are home to some 500,000 Shi'ites.

Some of the 17 Westerners missing and believed kidnapped in Lebanon are thought to be held in the suburbs.

Civilians passed the start of their New Year Day trapped indoors, fearing the fighting would worsen.

Amal sources said two Syrian soldiers, part of a Syrian force in control of the suburbs, were

wounded Saturday night in similar clashes between Amal and Hizbollah.

Hizbollah sources said one of their gunmen was killed in Saturday's clash which was rapidly contained by Syrian troops.

Both factions blamed the other for triggering the fighting.

Amal accused Hizbollah of kidnapping one of its members in the suburbs while Hizbollah said Amal militiamen harassed one of its followers.

Amal and Hizbollah officials said contacts were underway to halt the fighting, the second outbreak since Syria and Iran intervened in November to end five days of battles in the suburbs that killed 29 people and

wounded 72.

The two factions clashed last Tuesday but there were no casualties.

Amal and Hizbollah, vying for dominance of Lebanon's 1.5 million Shi'ites, have frequently fought since 1984 when Hizbollah emerged as a challenge to Amal.

Amal ousted some 1,000 Hizbollah fighters from South Lebanon in April. In fighting in May between the two sides some 500 people were killed.

Syria stopped the May battles by deploying thousands of soldiers in the area.

Hizbollah, financed and ideologically inspired by Iran, seeks a greater political role among Lebanon's Shi'ites while Amal wants to maintain its leading role.

## Qadhafi certain Pan Am plane sabotaged, denies involvement

**PARIS (R)** — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said Saturday he believed sabotage caused the crash of a Pan Am jumbo jet in Scotland, which killed 270 people, but he denied that Libya, Iran or Syria was responsible.

Qadhafi interviewed on French television by satellite from Tripoli, was asked what he would say to President Reagan or President-elect George Bush if they were listening to him. He replied: "I would say there had definitely been sabotage."

British investigators have found traces of explosives in the plane's debris and the government has said a bomb caused the Boeing 747, flying from London to New York, to crash on the small Scottish town of Lockerbie Dec. 21.

The Libyan leader declared: "Neither Syria nor Libya nor Iran were responsible."

Responsibility for the attack has been claimed by a pro-Iranian group called the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution. Iran has denied involvement.

Asked about U.S. suspicions that Libya played a part in the attack, Qadhafi said: "The Americans are always seeking justifications for their acts. This time the act has been wrongly attributed to us."

"We will stand up to these accusations. We are sure that any attack, any aggression by the United States will be doomed to failure."

He continued: "The United States could not get worldwide support if it were to attack Lebanon, Iran, Libya or Syria." The United States bombed Tripoli in April 1986.

Libya's relations with the United States have been even cooler than usual in recent weeks over Washington's accusations that a factory built in Libya was for the production of poison gas. Libya says it is a legitimate pharmaceutical products plant.

U.S. rejection assailed

Qadhafi attacked the U.S. rejection Saturday of his offer of international inspection of the factory, based in a sparsely populated area 60 kilometres from the coast.

He said the United States was "talking a new language of colonialism."

Referring to U.S. State Department comments that the offer was inadequate and that a chemical weapons factory could easily be modified to appear as a legitimate industrial, chemical plant, Qadhafi said:

"That means nothing. The factory is purely pharmaceutical. Do

we have to shut down our chemical industry now? Is that what the Americans want? They made missiles for Israel and they have built nuclear weapons."

Qadhafi congratulated the pro-Libyan Fatah Revolutionary Council led by Abu Nidal for its release two days ago of two French girls held captive for over a year.

Marie-Laure Valente, seven, and her six-year-old sister Virginie returned to France after they were freed in Libya. But Qadhafi said the group should have released their mother Jacqueline at the same time.

The three, the mother's boyfriend and four members of his family were seized from a pleasure yacht off the Gaza Strip in November 1987. The adults are still in captivity.

The Libyan leader said he appealed to all kidnappers holding hostages in the Middle East to release them.

"I appeal to all kidnappers, not just Abu Nidal, but especially to Abu Nidal, to release all hostages they are holding."

He shrugged off questions about the timing of the release, which coincided with the Libyan stage of the Paris-Dakar motor rally and meant that French television teams were on hand.

"These questions are very cynical," he said.

Qadhafi said he believed the factory was purely pharmaceutical. Do

## MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

### Bhutto to visit S. Arabia Jan. 17

**NICOSIA (R)** — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto will visit Saudi Arabia Jan. 17 on her first trip abroad since she was elected last month, the Qatari News Agency said Sunday. Bhutto will discuss bilateral, regional and Islamic issues with Saudi officials, the agency said in a report from Riyadh monitored in Nicosia.

### Arap Moi rejects Arab criticism

**NAIROBI (R)** — President Daniel Arap Moi has attacked Arab countries for questioning Kenya's decision to re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel. In a New Year message broadcast live Saturday night from Nakuru, 160 kilometres north-west of the capital, Moi said: "No one has the right to lecture Kenya on matters of policy. Kenyans are our children — as a free country, Kenya has the right to decide its own destiny without interference from outside." The Arab League last week expressed regret at the Kenyan decision to renew ties with Israel, severed in 1973 in line with an Organisation of Africa Unity Resolution. Kenyan newspapers Saturday gave prominence to pictures of the Israeli flag being raised again at the embassy in Nairobi.

### President urges end to Cyprus divisions

**NICOSIA (AP)** — President George Vassiliou, leader of the Greek Cypriot majority, called Saturday for new efforts to end the sectarian partition of the war-divided island and said "Division and strife belong to epochs long past." In a New Year address broadcast by the state-run television and radio networks, he appealed to Turkish Cypriots to join with the majority in building "the Cyprus of the 21st century." He declared: "In this small island, we all have our share of bitterness and distress. It is, however, high time to work for peace and unity in our country." He said that the "present division... constitutes a striking anomaly in a world of growing international trends toward ever greater unities." Vassiliou issued his appeal amid a new round of talks with Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Deoguktas on ways of reunifying the island under a United Nations-proposed bizonal federation. The first round of talks between August and November ended with little sign of progress.

### Iran shuns women soloists

**NICOSIA (R)** — Solo women singers will remain barred from the airwaves of Iran despite rumours of a change in policy, the country's broadcasting chief was quoted Saturday as saying. Mohammad Hashemi said radio and television would go on playing music by female choirs but women singing alone did not conform to the broadcasting organisation's Islamic code, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported. "In a country with more than 50 million people, naturally there are different tastes and the organisation certainly cannot hope to satisfy all of them," he said. IRNA said Hashemi was speaking at the inauguration of a radio transmission centre in the central province of Yazd. He had some consolation for any disgruntled listeners. He promised that radio and television programmes marking the 10th anniversary of Iran's revolution Feb. 11 would be better than ever.

### Bangladeshis flock to Iran for jobs

**DHAKA (R)** — Abject poverty and widespread unemployment have forced up to 10,000 Bangladeshis to take up illegal residence in Iran, Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud said Sunday. "We have only 2,000 expatriate nationals working in Iran under legal permits but there are up to 10,000 others staying there illegally," he told a news conference. Mahmud said Iran was considering a request he made during a recent visit to Tehran that the 10,000 be granted legal residence and work permits. Mahmud paid a three-day visit to Tehran from Dec. 20 before flying to Pakistan capital of Islamabad for the fourth summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Bangladesh earned \$600 million from remittances from more than half a million expatriate workers during the fiscal year that ended last June.

## U.N. chief calls for intra-Afghan dialogue for peaceful settlement

**UNITED NATIONS (R)** — Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar has expressed concern over the slow pace of movement towards a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan and urged an intra-Afghan dialogue aimed at setting up a broad-based government.

In a statement issued through a spokesman Saturday, he expressed concern at the continuous suffering and plight of Afghans both inside and outside the country, with millions displaced and refugees.

"While welcoming the recent positive steps toward a promotion of a peaceful settlement, the

secretary general expresses also his concern at the slow pace of the developments in that direction," the statement said.

"Accordingly he appeals to all Afghans to spare no efforts and take the necessary steps towards an intra-Afghan dialogue for the establishment of a broad-based government and the creation of the necessary conditions of peace and normalcy that would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homeland in safety and honour."

Perez de Cuellar said he hoped 1989 would see the end of the "long and tragic war in that coun-

try and that it will be a year of peace, reconstruction and rehabilitation."

Soviet-backed Afghan President Najibullah Friday declared a unilateral ceasefire in the 10-year-old war against guerrillas starting Jan. 1, but this was not referred to in the secretary general's statement.

The ceasefire call has been rejected by Pakistan-based rebels, who have vowed to fight on until all Soviet troops withdraw from Afghanistan and Najibullah's government is overthrown.

Under accords signed in Geneva last April all Soviet troops are to be out of the country by Feb. 15.

## Swiss police free Turkish businessman, hold 3 suspects

**GENEVA (Agencies)** — Swiss police Saturday freed a Turkish businessman reported kidnapped in Geneva and said they are holding three Turkish asylum seekers as suspects.

Police spokesman Marcel Vandroz told a press conference that 28-year-old Mehmet Reyhan was freed unharmed shortly before noon (11:00 GMT) in a Geneva apartment following a tip from a Geneva resident.

Vandroz said Reyhan was found in one room and that he was under guard by two of the suspects who were in another room. He said they had no firearms but carried knives. A third suspect was detained at another unspecified place.

The abductors who had demanded five million Swiss francs (\$3.3 million) ransom were identified by Vandroz merely as Turkish nationals, aged 21, 27, and 36, who had been in Switzerland for several years pending a decision on their request for political asylum. Their names were not disclosed.

Vandroz said it was "too early" to say whether the kidnappers were affiliated to any group opposed to the Turkish government. Reyhan's family said the abductors identified themselves in telephone calls as members of an unknown "Vengeance Brigade" of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) seeking to set up an independent, Marxist, Kurdish state.

He said a criminal investigation was underway and was expected to shed soon more light on the motives of the kidnappers. "I am very happy to free again," Mehmet Reyhan told reporters. "At some point I feared for my life."

He said he was held up at gunpoint last Tuesday after he had stepped out of his downtown hotel and was taken away. He said that attackers spoke Turkish but declined to say more about their possible identity.

He looked pale but in good health as he spoke briefly at the police press conference where he was joined by his father, Ugur Reyhan. And his twin-brother Ali who had come to Geneva at the demand of the kidnappers.

Ugur Reyhan is a member on the executive board of the conservative Istanbul daily Tercuman which broke the story of the kidnapping. Mehmet is based in Luxembourg but travels to Switzerland frequently on business.

Spokesman Vandroz said eyewitnesses had told police they had seen four men getting out of a car Thursday, one obviously being held against his will. Police had found the apartment after tracing the car.

## Ancient garrage could hold clue to who built Giza pyramids

**Sara Al Gammal**  
Reuters

**CAIRO** — Bits of seeds, dried mud and ancient garbage may hold the clue to a mystery that has puzzled men for centuries — who built Egypt's Giza pyramids and when?

A group of American and Egyptian specialists have started an intensive search for clues about the ancient Egyptians who built the pyramids of Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus.

"What's missing is the people, the masses of people. In two centuries of excavations in Giza, nobody asked: who were the workers, how were they housed, who made their bread?" archaeologist Mark Lehner from Minot, Ohio, told Reuters.

Lehner, who is directing two digs to the west and south of the pyramids with Zahi Hawass, said previous excavations had mainly focused on the ancient structures: their temples, tombs, statues and hieroglyphic inscriptions.

Hawass, director-general of the Giza pyramid area, said they were searching for the workers' village, established by King Cheops to the south of his pyramid.

"If we know the size of the village, we'll know how many people lived in it, how many people built the pyramids, what they were like and possibly how old the pyramids are," he said.

The existence of a workers' city was first mentioned in the writings of Greek historian Herodotus who lived from 484-425 B.C., Hawass told Reuters. Historians believe that about 5,000 years ago, at least 100,000 men cut seven million cubic metres of limestone, and pushed and pulled the gigantic blocks up a ramp on rollers.

They stacked them precisely — to the thousandth of an inch — to form three massive pyramids meant to be eternal tombs for their kings.

Other archaeologists this century have uncovered mud-brick walls, seals and pottery sherds from the workers' settlements. But Lehner said no detailed study on the people who built the structures had

been undertaken before.

"People have not thought enough about the implications of organising 100,000 men in one place and at one time, especially in ancient times," he said.

Erich von Däniken, author of "Chariot of the Gods," speculated that the technology used by the ancient Egyptians must have been passed on by aliens from outer space.

Lehner said a team of 14 American archaeologists, scientists and bone and plant specialists hoped to find anthropological answers to the mysteries of the pyramids.

Every bit of pottery, bone, brick and grain they come across is collected for analysis and dating.

"We're interested in the garbage of these ancient times. If you look at garbage, even modern garbage, it tells you a lot about the society, who they were and how they lived," he said.

By analysing the grains, Lehner said they could tell if the workers were being fed wheat or barley and if it was

imported. Fragments of bones would indicate what animals they were eating and how often.

"Because this type of anthropological archaeology has not been done here in Giza, it can tell us all about the economy of the time, the environment and climate."

Digging three trenches west of Chephren's pyramid, the team has unearthed limestone, mud and red clay walls, "one extending three metres down."

Lehner said Sir William Flinders Petrie excavated two galleries 30 metres long and three metres wide near the same site in 1887.

Petrie identified them as the pyramid builders' barracks and said 91 such rooms existed on the site.

"But we don't think this is where the workers lived. You don't find ancient deposits or garbage here. Out there to the south, we are finding remains of settlement," Lehner said.

Hawass said he believed Petrie's barracks were workshops for making pottery and stone artifacts to put in temples, and included an area to store fresh

food offerings to the priests.

Lehner's team found bits of alabaster and granite and is testing the idea that the galleries were to effect workers' banks used to store their wages, paid in commodities.

In another excavation site to the south of the pyramids, signs of settlement are beginning to emerge from under mounds of coarse sand.

Zoo archaeologist Howard Hecker from New York said they had found ancient cattle and goat bones among pottery sherds, seeds and dried mud. No human bones have yet been



The Great Pyramid, with the Sphinx in the foreground

Lehner said they had uncovered what could be the thin outline of disintegrated walls of a mudbrick house, possibly part of the workers' village.

If the samples taken off the site belonged to the village and were dated back to before Cheops' reign, Hawass said, the pyramids could be older than their estimated 5,000 years.

"But it is still too early to know. This is just a testing season," said Lehner, adding that the team would continue work until the end of January.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 7311-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran

15:40 Children's programmes

15:45 News summary in Arabic

15:50 World News

16:20 Arabic series

16:40 Local programme

16:50 Programme on plastic art

16:50 News in Arabic

16:55 Arabic series

17:00 Programme review

17:05 Sunday Forum

17:20 Variety show

17:30 News summary in Arabic

17:15 Variety show (record)

PROGRAMME TWO

16:30 Cultural programme

16:40 News in French

17:15 Weekly Sport magazine

15:30 News in Hebrew

15:45 Varieties

16:00 News in Arabic

16:05 Alio Alio

16:30 Jack and Mike

16:50 News in English

17:20 Jewel in the Crown

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15:30 Anglican Church Tel. 623583, Tel. 628543.

16:00 Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 71331.

16:30 Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 71331.

17:00 St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151.

17:20 Annun International Church Tel. 68326.

17:40 Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.

18:00 Rainbow Congregation Tel. 822605.

18:05 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 821264

15:00 Prayer Times

16:30 Friday (Sundat) Fajr

16:40 Dhuhr

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## NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

**CONDOLENCES:** His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday delegated his advisor for tribal affairs to convey his condolences to Al Shira'ah family over the death of the late Faraj Falah Al Shira'ah. (Petra)

**HAI HASSAN INSPECTS TRANSPORT WORK:** Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Khalid Al Haj Hassan Sunday inspected progress of work at the United Company for Land Transport and discussed with the company's director general the organisation of the trucks loading and offloading to ensure the flow of goods from and to Aqaba. (Petra)

**PREMIUM POSTAL SERVICES:** The Post and Postal Saving Corporation has introduced the premium post service with Algeria through regular flights by the Royal Jordanian planes, thus bringing to 25 the number of countries applying this service, the corporation's Director Ghazi Rifai said Sunday. (Petra)

**ZARQA GOVERNORATE PROJECTS:** Zarqa Governor Eid Al Qatameh urged heads of municipal councils within the Zarqa Governorate to conduct an assessment of all development projects in their region. He said that the councils ought to present plans for future schemes to the governor as soon as possible. (Petra)

**ELISS HEALTH CENTRE:** Tafleeb Health Department has completed work on a JD 30,000 health centre at Eliss. The department said that at least 500 citizens will benefit from the new centre, and added that a comprehensive health centre will be built in Tafleeb at the cost of JD 22,000. (Petra)

**STAMP COLLECTION WINS AWARD:** A Jordanian stamp collection displayed at the Prague exhibition for 1988 has won a silver medal in appreciation of their cultural, historical and humanitarian value. (Petra)

**HUWWARAH MUNICIPAL COUNCIL:** Huwwarah Municipality has elected a new municipal council, headed by Barakat Mahmoud Shatanawi who won 1,469 votes in the elections which took place Sunday morning. The municipality elected 6 other members to serve as municipal council members. (Petra)

**AQABA EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:** Aqaba District Education Department Director Majed Abu Darwish chaired a meeting for the department heads and discussed with them the department's voluntary work plan for the year 1989. (J.T.)

**TEENAGER DIES IN CAVE COLLAPSE:** A 15-year-old boy identified as Kh.B.S. was found dead in Wadi Al Azraq area near Salt, where the cave he was playing near collapsed, thus breaking his skull. In Kuweisneb, a three-year-old child fell in a deserted well while he was playing with his brothers, and was rushed to the Bashir hospital in serious condition. (Al Dastour)

**ANJARA MUNICIPALITY ELECTIONS:** Anjara municipality in Ajlona district Sunday elected a new council headed by Khalifa Ibrahim Al Smadi, who won 1,795 votes, in addition to 7 other members. (Petra)

## 44 policewomen to graduate today

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of 44 policewomen will graduate here Monday at a ceremony to be held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor.

The graduates, the 25th batch so far to be turned out from the Public Security Department's (PSD) Women Police Division, will receive diplomas and awards from the Queen for completing a course of training.

The Queen will watch a performance of the graduates skills in martial arts and will inspect other parts of the PSD's divisions.

The graduates have been trained in conducting various types of police work, criminal investigations, criminal laboratory technique and administrative tasks associated with police-women's work at different de-

partments. Women police in Jordan are being employed to carry out traffic duties, and groups work side by side with policemen at government departments, PSD offices, airports and border posts.

Their four-month training periods include taekwondo and karate martial arts, the use of lights arms and first aid.

## Department to start distribution of income tax forms to taxpayers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Income Tax Department Monday starts distributing forms to taxpayers around the Kingdom to collect information about their income so that estimates can be made for their income tax, according to a department official Sunday.

He said that according to the department law taxpayers will be allowed certain discounts if they pay their dues in the first three months of the year or their revenues made in the past year.

The Income Tax Department this year plans to collect more than JD 60 million up from around JD 50 million in the past year, according to the official.

He said that teams from the Income Tax Departments will distribute the forms to organiza-

## WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

### EXHIBITIONS

- ★ An art exhibition by Friends of Plastic Art in Gulf countries at the National Gallery.
- ★ An exhibition of works by Contemporary Arab Artists at Al Wasiti Art Gallery.
- ★ An exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Farouk Lambaz at Alia Art Gallery — 5:30 p.m.
- ★ The Jordanian plastic art exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

### LECTURE

- ★ A lecture on Privatisation by Professor Emanuel Savas, chairman of the Department of Management — The City University of New York, at the American Centre.

## Department of Customs issues special laws for expatriates, diplomats

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Customs Sunday issued a set of regulations governing cars, pieces of furniture and electrical appliances brought into the country by Jordanian expatriates returning to settle here, or by diplomatic missions.

diplomatic mission has been terminated or if the car has been damaged in an accident making it unfit for the diplomatic mission's use.

For a member of a diplomatic mission to enjoy the right of bringing in cars, he should be delegated by his own government and holding his government's nationality. Should the diplomat hold two nationalities one of which is Jordanian, he would not enjoy such a privilege, Qudab noted.

A diplomatic mission can own one or two motorcycles for official use and they will be exempted from customs duty, but diplomats cannot own their motorcycles, Qudab said.

Five-year-old cars cannot be brought in by diplomatic missions, Qudab noted.

He said that diplomats, who benefit from exemptions should present a list of household furniture, cars and other belongings to the Foreign Ministry to get permission to take them out of the country upon departure.

These regulations are said apply to all non-Jordanians employed by U.N. offices and Arab League organisations operating in the country.

Department Director General Adel Qudab said that expatriates can bring in pieces of furniture if they produce a document proving the termination of their work abroad, or that their children, have been transferred to schools in the Kingdom and must produce a document proving that they acquired new jobs in Jordan.

Expatriates or students can bring in used furniture provided that they had spent at least two years abroad and that they had been using the furniture themselves for at least six months before returning to Jordan, according to Qudab.

As to cars, they should be registered before Nov. 6, 1988 in the names of expatriates wishing to bring them back with them and that expatriates cannot sell such cars before the lapse of at least one year, according to Qudab.

He said that expatriates or students returning to the country cannot bring in brand new electrical appliances of the type on which a ban had been clamped.

But, he added, they can bring in used appliances, one of each kind of the following: "Refrigerators, washing machines, television sets, gas ranges, vacuum cleaners, tape recorders, fans, carpets of no more than 60 square metres in area."

Referring to diplomatic missions, Qudab said that cars registered in Jordan before Nov. 6, 1988 can be replaced or cleared only after exemption from duty for three years.

Cars registered in Jordan after Nov. 6 cannot be cleared but can be re-exported or sold to persons who enjoy exemptions of duty on their belongings, or can be regarded under the temporary entry category.

Qudab said that cars exempted from duty or those under temporary entry in Jordan cannot be sold before three years, except those of the tour of duty of a member of a

## Committee to exempt missions from importation of banned commodities

AMMAN (Petra) — A government-appointed follow-up and coordination committee is taking measures to exempt diplomatic missions and regional and international organisations which have offices in Amman from the recent ban on the importation of certain commodities.

The committee which met under the chairmanship of Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Saqqaf discussed a number of questions related to the importation of

these commodities which fall within the luxury bracket with a view to allow personnel employed by foreign diplomatic missions, regional and international organisations and foreign companies to import them, according to a statement Sunday.

The statement said that a sub-committee was formed at the meeting to conduct a comprehensive assessment of these offices and organisations and the conditions that should be met so that

exemptions can be made. The committee also set up a number of sub-committees to examine the marble factory company's financial condition and to look into the prospect of setting specifications and fixed prices for the sale of iron according to the statement.

Saqqaf, who addressed the meeting, reviewed the committee's achievements and activities over the past year to remove obstacles that could impede the application of economic, financial and monetary measures introduced by the government in order to reduce spending, rationalise consumption and stimulate the national economy.

The present circumstances, he said, make it imperative on all sectors to cooperate for the sake of increasing production, so that the country can maintain the economic progress in the new year.

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) said Sunday that all residential areas in the Kingdom are free from wolves and that one of the residential areas within the Greater Amman boundaries has been attacked by a fierce animal.

The PSD added that during the very cold nights of last week, when there was frost formation, three stray dogs have resorted to some areas in search of warmth and food.

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## 90 Jordanian artists contribute to very enjoyable, interesting art exhibition

By Meg Abu Hamdan  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Appropriately bringing the end to the artistic events of 1988 is a huge exhibition of the work of over 90 Jordanian artists currently active in the Kingdom.

Organised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage the display of 200 works of art, which include all the disciplines, fills the hall at the Royal Cultural Centre almost to bursting point.

Yet despite the rather cramped conditions it is a very interesting and enjoyable show where the influences of the more established artists are reflected in the work of the younger ones and where more than any other joint exhibition in the past there is a noticeably greater conscious effort by almost all the artists to produce work that is relevant to their own background, culture and surroundings.

Dominating the work on display however is a portrait of the French pianist Eric Berchot by Fahrelnissa Zeid. Painted while the musician was practicing for a concert, it is a work that typifies the princess' unique ability to capture the essence of a person in a totally original way where her instinctive control of colour and composition imbues her paintings with great vitality and dynamism.

It is a style that woo the princess great critical acclaim in a retrospective of her work held earlier this month in her native Istanbul. The influence of Fahrelnissa Zeid's personality and work can be seen in the paintings of the members of her institute. Her Royal Highness Princess Aliya, Suha Shuman, Hind Nasser and Jeanette Jumbalati, also on display.

Although very active in putting on exhibitions and running the Jordan National Gallery, Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan Ali has not held an exhibition of her own work in a long time and the oil painting on display at this exhibition reminds us of her talents at re-creating the desert with its touches of colour, its lonely castles shimmering in the heat.

Also good to see is the work of Khaled Kriess and of his wife Clara, both excellent abstract



One of the paintings by Ali Ghul currently on display at the Royal Cultural Centre

artists more of whose work we hope to see next year. Two other husband and wife teams, all established artists in their own rights are Ali and Azziz Ammoura, both of whom have submitted quietly stirring pieces that typify their chosen genres, and Dodi and Samer Tabba'a. Although better known as a sculptor, Samer Tabba'a has submitted one of his relief prints, a minimalist piece where tiny spidery scratches are interspersed with randomly placed areas of texture highlighted in bold primary colours. From Dodi Tabba'a comes a collage constructed out of cardboard where the rough texture and dull buff colour of the material play, along with the painted areas of matt greys and sludgy greens a vital part in this well framed two part piece.

A work showing the influence of Ammoura is his one time student Ghassan Abu Leboe the winner of a recent competition held at the Spanish Cultural Centre. Abu Leboe's portrait of a boy playing the out set against deep background colours is a well painted, gently effective piece that does not romanticise or

stereotype its sitter, allowing his character to come through the irregular features. Other younger participants include Ghada Dahdaleh who has submitted an interesting abstract where matt yellows and greens play against unpainted areas of paper, Mohammad Jaloo whose bedouin figures emerge from broad strokes of white brushwork and Aadeb Atwan whose painting of a herd of cattle seen head on is a clever study of repeated forms using unusual colours and textures. Abdullah Nawafleh's townscape, full of light and shadows, while not a new idea is a well painted piece as is the genre piece by Munther Hamameh which captures a little painted rural scene from the Jordan Valley of a bedouin woman helping a new born calf find its mother's milk.

Hidden away behind a screen next to an excellent print by Yaser Duweik, whose work we never seen enough of, is a lovely piece by Nawal Abdullah. Painting the traditional vase of flowers as if she is looking at it through a venetian blind Abdullah reduces it to a pattern of grids and diagonals full of light, colour and energy.

More good work comes from Ayyad Al Nimer, Mabmond Sadiq and Ali Ghul whose very De Chirico piece of a roughly sketched nude lying on the piazza of the Dome of the Rock is a visually intriguing work.

Although there are a few poor and indifferent pieces, the standard of the exhibition is generally good, giving a very comprehensive idea of the state of contemporary art in Jordan at this time. With the interest the exhibition has generated and the discussions arisen from it many will support the ministry's hope to make this event an annual one.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

## Israelis expel 13 Palestinians to Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

The underground leadership of the year-old Palestinian uprising had called on the 1.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to confront the Israeli army to commemorate the day.

Arafat himself participated in the Dec. 28, 1985 attack. There were no casualties in that attack.

Hundreds of Palestinians gathered in remote West Bank villages to hold parades, an Arab reporter said. The teenagers gathered in at least half a dozen villages, dressed in quasi-military

green and khaki-coloured vests and sporting masks to hide their faces, the Arab reporter said.

They set off firecrackers and danced in the streets, he said. In Bethlehem, Palestinians spray-painted pictures of Arafat on the wall and flew Palestinian flags on telephone lines and electric poles, an Arab reporter said.

Two Arabs were shot and wounded during a protest in Ramallah, a military spokesman said.

At least 354 Palestinians have been killed in the revolt which erupted in December 1987 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. December's death toll of 31 was the

highest monthly total.

'Popular army'

In Baghdad, a PLO spokesman said Fatah had formed a Palestinian "popular army" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He said the popular army consisted of thousands of youths under orders from Force 17, the security force of the PLO.

"The popular army is not a substitute for the unified command of the Palestinian uprising but is another method of struggle... of the Palestinian people against Israeli occupation," the spokesman said.

The spokesman, who declined to be identified, read from a statement which he said was distributed by Fatah in Gaza Sunday.

"The popular army had been assigned to safeguard the homeland, security and order, establish justice and law and embody the power of the people," the statement said.

The spokesman said hundreds of popular army members held a parade in the Nablus area of the West Bank two months ago.

Arafat said in a message broadcast by Voice of Palestine radio Saturday that the popular army and other fighters were imposing the will of the Palestinian masses despite Israeli military forces.

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The devastated town of Lockerbie, Scotland (Sygma photo)

## Egypt urges Israel to respond positively to PLO

(Continued from page 1)

political personality, whether official or unofficial, be added.

The United States agreed this month to end a 13-year ban on contacts with the PLO after Chairman Yasser Arafat formally recognised Israel's right to exist and renounced terrorism.

Arafat: Turning point  
Arafat said Saturday that

Washington's decision to talk to the PLO had removed the crucial obstacle to an international Middle East peace conference.

But he vowed that the uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories would continue until the occupation was ended and a free and independent Palestinian state established with Jerusalem as its capital.

Arafat's statement, read over Voice of Palestine Radio, was issued to mark Sunday's 24th anniversary of the founding of the

Fatah movement. Washington was "an important turning point in the history of the Palestinian question, since the United States of America is the protector of our enemy and the backer of our enemy's occupation and aggression against our people."

"We look forward to the dialogue achieving logical results in the shortest possible time to preserve the blood of our sons, who meet martyrdom every day by the

He said the dialogue with Israeli occupation forces' bullets," he said.

Arafat said the sacrifices of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip meant "we were able to impose on the United States the recognition of the Palestinian truth."

He said he expected victory soon. "The hour of freedom has struck and the jihad (holy war) of our people has borne its fruit..." he said. "We are very close to victory."



## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
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## A true sense of maturity

JUDGING by the decrease of the state budget approved Saturday by the cabinet, in comparison with that for 1988, one may categorise the 1989 state budget as an austerity budget. However the mere JD 40 million drop in the total budget figures for 1989 is more than offset by the increase in Jordan's self reliance ensuing from the new fiscal allocations and by the principal features of the budget which are designed to stimulate investment, rationalise consumption and increase exports. All in all the endorsed budget for 1989 tells the story of a resilient Jordanian economy which has passed through difficult periods of readjustment with flying colours.

To us Jordanians this comprehensive picture emerging from the figures and allocations earmarked for state expenditures throughout this new year is most assuring. To prove our point, our currency has stabilised and the era of readjustment was taken with a stride by the majority of the population. Gone are the days when we were living beyond our means and in are the new days when the country, government and people, accept the day of reckoning with a true sense of responsibility and maturity. And now that the country has wholeheartedly accepted to trim the fat from the national economy, the people of Jordan can sigh with relief that the new economic and fiscal era that was ushered few months ago will now continue on sound and rational basis.

If there is a singular important message emerging from the new budget just approved, it is the message of coming of age for Jordan and Jordanians economically, socially and culturally. For as we Jordanians begin to adapt to new wise criteria in our daily lives, our wasteful and extravagant days will be cut short in the most positive ways; and in due course our life style and social habits would have to undergo positive transformation for the better.

This new dynamism in our society, on more than one level, will set into motion the reordering of our national and individual priorities in a manner commensurate with the many challenges and dangers beseeching us from all corners.

### ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i daily and the other two Jordanian Arabic dailies Sunday tackled the 1989 budget which was announced by the minister of finance Saturday. The paper noted that the budget introduced guidelines which call on Jordanians to have more self reliance in building their economy and to rationalise consumption in order to overcome the present economic situation affecting Jordan and the rest of the Arab World. Public awareness is needed and cooperation on the part of all citizens is essential to enable the country to confront the challenges and to maintain the momentum of construction and progress, the paper added. The JD 1.03 billion budget is a large one indeed and the JD 122 million deficit is not a miracle to cover through serious and diligent endeavours by all citizens, the paper continued. It said that the allocations for economic and social services and the armed forces are indicators that the government, backed by the public efforts is determined to pursue the march towards further progress regardless of the prevailing circumstances.

The editor of Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday reflected on the past year's achievements with particular focus on the Palestinian uprising which has lasted for more than a year and helped the Palestinian people to revive their issue in the international arena. Rakan Al Majali says that the uprising is a real revolt that continued throughout the past year and brought about very positive elements in the march towards a lasting Middle East peace. The past year also witnessed the Iraqi victory in the Gulf conflict and the beginning of a peace between Iraq and Iran, and it also saw the beginning of a true orientation towards a global peace represented in the superpower determination to resolve regional conflicts like Afghanistan, Namibia and Cambodia, the writer adds. He says that in the coming year Jordanians hope that King Hussein's efforts to bring Syria and Egypt closer together and end differences in the Arab World will succeed and bear fruit. He expresses hope that the New Year will bring with it more hope for peace and a brighter future for the Arab World.

Al Dustour daily said that the 1989 budget was inspired from the ideas of King Hussein's address to the nation at the national development conference in November and aims at achieving more progress in the country. The figures and allocations in the new budget reflect the government's determination to pursue political, economic, financial and monetary policies designed to help Jordanians rely on their own resources and increase their national production and reduce expenditure, the paper noted. It said such orientation and such plans are bound to breathe new life in the national economy and eventually reduce the deficit in the balance of trade and help achieve the inspired goals. The paper said Jordanians are optimistic about the future since the recent economic measures are aimed at helping them re-adjust to the needs of the new phase and maintain progress.

Sawt Al Shaab daily said that the budget worked out upon directives from His Majesty King Hussein goes hand in hand with the government's orientation to rationalise expenditure and consumption. Jordan welcomes a New Year with a new budget with great hopes that its citizens will maintain the momentum for construction and is determined to abide by the King's directives in all endeavours designed to confront the challenges and pursue the process of development. The government's efforts, the paper said, succeeded so far to reduce by 45 per cent the deficit margin compared to last year's budget and there is nothing that can stand in the way of Jordanian people's efforts to pursue the struggle and build a strong economy to take them towards the year 2000.

# Where freedom truly lies

In the first of two articles, John West reflects the feelings of Palestinians he encountered in occupied Jerusalem over the Christmas holidays. The second article will appear Tuesday, Jan. 3.

"EVERYWHERE, everyday, things were happening that were unbearable. I will give you a small example," Ahmad said, leaning forward in his chair. "As a resident of the West Bank, I am not allowed to spend the night in Jerusalem. But some years back I had a job here, painting houses, and instead of spending over two hours a day travelling to and from my family home, I found a hostel in the old city. One day, at one in the morning, the soldiers made a random raid. When they saw my papers, they took me off to spend the night in a cell. The judge fined me — I don't remember how much in shekels

— but I remember thinking at the time it was about 200 dinars. Can you imagine?" We were speaking at a friend's house in an Arab suburb of the Holy City, on Christmas night. The rain outside was coming down in sheets, and the wind was bending the trees in the street. But inside, the company was warm and relaxed.

"Unbearable" is a very relative term, I thought to myself — since the start of the intifada, the killings, beatings, random arrests and seemingly senseless destruction have increased many times over, not to mention the crash in living standards — is that not more unbearable?

Every Palestinian you meet, each in his or her own way, answers that question without you ever asking it. The confidence, anger, openness, and even humour that they show tells the story of this proud people. In their hearts, the

Palestinians of the occupied territories have already regained their freedom through the intifada. Travelling through the West Bank, it sometimes strikes you that the purpose of the peace process is simply to force recognition of what is already a reality.

— Running through the storms that came thundering down at a moments notice throughout the Christmas holiday, twice I took refuge in the nearest shop in the old city.

"This weather's crappy," I say flippantly to the shopkeeper, trying to open up a conversation. "When I came to the Middle East, everyone back home told me to watch out for

the beat."

Twice the reaction was exactly the same — a look of earnest concern came over their faces, like a conscientious schoolteacher who fears that his pupil has not understood.

"Don't say that. The rain comes from God, to make all the crops grow and help the farmers — it would be worse if it was dry." It took several reassurances before they could be certain I was only joking. Later, in one of the camps, I was told that agriculture has really taken off since the intifada, being the one area of their economic life where the Palestinians can exercise autonomy. Plots which had lain uncultivated for years were now in use again, everyone who could had their own little patch.

Neither of the shopkeepers I spoke to was involved in selling any produce — but all for one

and one for all has become a way of life.

— Suleiman sat in the guests room of his home, in one of the camps, telling us about the demonstrations. Three hours earlier, I had been sitting in a coffee shop in Jerusalem when his brother had walked in. We had started talking, he had invited me to see his home, along with four other foreigners, and we had taken a couple of service taxis to the entrance of the camp. Just like that. Outside, some children, no more than nine or ten years old by the sound of their voices, were shouting "PLO, Israel No." in English so that the ever present soldiers at the entrance to the camp would be quite sure to understand it.

And three weeks ago they came down into the camp when we put a barricade up and started firing rubber bul-

lets, I was hit."

There was a moment's silence as everyone framed the delicate question in their minds.

"Where?" He grinned enigmatically — his two brothers sniggered — and patted his right buttock. "The best place," he said.

Outside, on the inside wall of their gate, although not naturally gifted as an artist, he had drawn a huge somewhat shabby mural of an Israeli military truck descending into the camp, entering houses and making arrests. His mother looked on, smiling indulgently as he talked us over it.

— Getting on a bus near Ramallah, the driver, having seen us say goodbye to some Palestinians before he stopped, refused to take any money. We had scarcely sat down when a youth leaned over and asked us, "so what do you think of our intifada, then?"

I was a little shocked — they say the Israeli spy network has collapsed in the past year, but even so, it was a very public place. Still, reasoning that he knew the risks better than I, I answered.

"We are with you." "Who's 'we'?", he asked. "Since the start of the intifada, nearly the whole world," I replied.

He nodded, and settled back in his seat, as if listening to a favourite tune.

"We know," he said.

— On the West Bank side of the Palestinian inspection point, relatives were waiting for arrivals from Jordan. Every so often the door would open, from the hangar-like building,

and someone would emerge carrying a bundle. A group of maybe thirty people, was gathered at any one time. Just inside, an immense Israeli guard (about 6 foot 7), was standing at a barrier, making sure one last time that everyone's papers were in order before they could get out. The relatives, and occasionally competing taxi-drivers, would open the door to peer in for either family or custom. The guard got annoyed.

"Shut the door," he kept shouting in heavily accented Arabic. Once or twice, he came out of the building to be more forcible about it, but the crowd faded away. Then they would come back, women and girls at the front, being less vulnerable, and start opening the door to look inside again. Collectively, they drove him mad.

Whatever the hardships they have to face, the Palestinians will not stop the intifada — this is the overwhelming impression I received. But how can they bring themselves to contemplate dealing with the Israelis, a people who have imprisoned them in their own homes, killed them in their own back yards, tried to deny them their own sons?

"Reality," the old man, with one eye shot out in the '48 war, says. "A Jewish state, a Palestinian state side by side — this is OK."

"We want peace," says a young intellectual, freshly returned from college in the States. "The Israelis don't want peace — but we will give them no choice."

"Palestine," one of the shabab in the front line, facing Israeli bullets, says. "Palestine."

## Through shock after shock, Gorbachev keeps his feet

By Bill Keller

MOSCOW — It is not hard to imagine Mikhail S. Gorbachev, an inveterate stock-taker, sitting down to calculate the effects of the past two weeks on his own standing as a leader, and concluding that on balance he had made the best of a dreadful situation.

Yes, the shattering earthquake in northern Armenia forced him to cut short his visit to New York before he had fully exploited the warm glow created by his announcement of a unilateral cut in Soviet military might. But he will get considerable mileage out of that move in the two years before the cuts are completed, while NATO ties itself in knots figuring how to respond. And his rapid departure to inspect the cities crushed by the quake was followed by a rush of sympathy from abroad.

Yes, the quake has been a huge emotional and economic blow to the Soviet Union. But by appealing for aid from the West and opening Armenia to all comers — Israeli rescue workers, Armenian-American pharmacists, journalists — he has helped ease the economic burden and won new credibility for his professions of greater openness. Gennadi I. Gerasimov, the Soviet spokesman, wrote in the newspaper Sovetskaya Kultura, that the quake proved "glasnost saves lives."

Yes, Gorbachev's personal standing in the smallest Soviet republic remains low. Armenians turned on him when he refused to take their side in the territorial dispute with neighbouring Azerbaijan last July, and since then he can do no right. His foray into the region did not win over the Armenians. Instead, he got their backs up by seeming to be more distressed about nationalist unrest than about the horrendous toll of the earthquake.

But since then, Gorbachev's trust lieutenant, Nikolai I. Ryzhkov, the Soviet prime minister and coordinator of aid from the Kremlin, has won for Moscow its first Armenian goodwill in months. Even ardent supporters of the Armenian national movement grew mystified when Ryzhkov talked in a respectful hush

The Soviet system cannot be blamed for earthquakes, but it is a system that seems to amplify the consequences of misfortune. Any country would have been reeling after such a blow. But anyone walking into the tent that was Communist Party headquarters in devastated Spitak one week after the quake might have thought the tremors had hit just hours before.

lives."

about his admiration for the Armenian people. Such basic political niceties often elude Gorbachev, whose instincts come more from the brain than the heart, but he picked the right surrogate, and it paid off.

Yes, the earthquake exposed the rusty immobility and chronic corruption of the Soviet system as shown by buildings constructed with more sand than cement in the mortar, and a relief effort that faltered in the first days because, it seemed, everyone stood around in a daze waiting for orders. But that's not Gorbachev's fault, is it? Indeed, it bolsters his argument that the system is badly in need of reform. Perhaps the forthcoming official investigations of the construction scandal will give Gorbachev's friends an opportunity to root out more of the old political machine that endures in Armenia.

reeling after such a blow. But anyone walking into the tent that was Communist Party headquarters in devastated Spitak one week after the quake might have thought the tremors had hit just hours before. A panicky official matchmaker was trying to assemble men and equipment — "You've got a crane? Wait somewhere here I have the name of a crane operator" — and generally not succeeding. Like Soviet builders, American developers have been known to thin the mortar when there was a buck to be skimmed. But it takes a special kind of corruption to allow whole cities to be built like that in a known earthquake zone.

Or take ethnic hatred. The problem is hardly exclusive to the Soviet Union, but this country seems especially ill equipped to resolve it through law or politics. Gorbachev may wish for a state where the people trust the government to render compromise and protect minority rights, but Armenia is a painful reminder that this trust does not exist here. So he can leave in the troops and tanks that now preserve an uneasy order, or he can take out the troops and risk more violence.

In a sense, the Armenians and Azerbaijanis are resolving the question themselves, by running away from each other in droves. A mass two-way exodus back to ethnically homogeneous republics, separated by a military cordon along the border, is a solution of sorts.

Or maybe not. The Azerbaijanis returning from Armenia are mostly farmers, and there is no spare land for them. The Armenians fleeing Azerbaijan are mostly urban dwellers and skilled workers, whose loss will be severely felt. This is a recipe for continued tension, especially in a society that does not provide well for the mobility of labour. More bad luck for Gorbachev — The New York Times.



Mikhail Gorbachev

## Mubarak — a cautious mover

By William C. Mann  
 The Associated Press

CAIRO — Hosni Mubarak learned international diplomacy under Anwar Sadat. But unlike his mercurial predecessor, the Egyptian president avoids grand gestures calculated to succeed through their shock value.

Sadat, the only Arab president ever to visit Israel, announced his stunning 1977 trip from the podium of Egypt's parliament. It was so unbelievable, many journalists in the audience reported it as a figure of speech, not a literal commitment to take his peace campaign to the parliament of the enemy.

By contrast, when Mubarak said over the Christmas weekend he also would go to Israel if it would help bring peace, he used visiting journalists — one Kuwaiti, one Japanese — to convey the message.

The message, a very tentative initiative, reflected the 57-year-old Mubarak's characteristic caution.

"Why not go? If this visit would lead to solving the (Arab-Israeli) problem, and if it would lead to establishing a just peace, then I am ready," he told the Kuwaiti newspaper Al Anbaa.

On Sunday, he repeated in an interview with Tokyo's Yomiuri Shimbun that he would be willing to go but said: "I have no plans. It depends. I don't accept any preconditions."

That seemed a slight step back from previous pronouncements, in which Mubarak said there would be no reason for him to meet with Yitzhak Shamir unless the hard-line Israeli prime minister changed his policies.

But it also sent a signal to Shamir, who welcomed the idea of a Mubarak visit, not to insist as a condition of his invitation that Mubarak go to Jerusalem. That would imply Egyptian acceptance of Israel's annexation of the eastern part of the city, which Israel occupied in the 1967 war.

In 1982, there was talk of a Mubarak trip, but it never got off the ground because the Israelis wanted him in occupied Jerusalem.

Such considered, signal-sending diplomacy has been a hallmark of Mubarak's seven years in office, which began after a national referendum a week after Muslim extremists assassinated Sadat on Oct. 6, 1981.

The opening to Israel and the peace treaty that followed two years later were among reasons the killers gave for the attack, in which Mubarak suffered a slight hand wound.

Sadat passed over several generals senior to Mubarak when he chose the good-natured air force commander as vice president in 1975.



Hosni Mubarak

He relied heavily on Mubarak, who first drew Sadat's eye with his performance in the 1973 war. Mubarak's air force jets opened the war with a successful first strike against Israeli positions in the occupied Sinai that gave Sadat the momentum he needed for the best Arab battlefield performance ever against Israel.

It later was to give him the political leverage he needed to make peace.

As president, Mubarak quickly began to work to recover Egypt's traditional position as political and military anchor of the Arab World, a position it lost after the Israel peace treaty, when most Arab countries and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) broke relations.

In June 1982, when King Khalid of Saudi Arabia died, Mubarak quietly and unobtrusively went to pay Egypt's respects. In 1983, he made up with the PLO by giving sanctuary to Chairman Yasser Arafat when dissident Palestinians forced him to leave Lebanon. Mubarak remained a staunch ally and major arms supplier of Iraq in its long war with Iran.

One by one, Arab barriers fell. Finally, in November 1987, leaders of the 22-member Arab League, boycotting Egypt en masse since 1979, voted that diplomatic relations were a matter of individual national interest.

Since then, all members except Libya, Lebanon and Syria have restored ties. Last week, Mubarak invited President Hafez Assad of Syria to visit Egypt, and Syrian media has begun hinting at a warming of relations.

In an interview shortly after Sadat selected him vice president, Mubarak hinted at the kind of president he would be.

"I am a man who likes to do his work perfectly and faithfully," he told the Cairo newspaper Al Akhbar.

He characterised his decision-making style in a 1986 interview with the Associated Press: "It's well-studied, well-calculated, then the decision. I never do anything just for the move... No, I am not that kind of man."

كنا في ليل



# Features

## Sonia Gandhi, does she have a future in politics?

By S. Venkat Narayan

NEW DELHI — To millions of Indians, she is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery. Dressed in expensive Kanjeevaram silk saris, she appears on television screens more frequently than any other woman. But she has not uttered a word to date.

Whether Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is receiving a visiting dignitary at the airport here, or shaking hands with kings, presidents and prime ministers during his frequent travels abroad, or whether he is going round the country on his "discover India" tours, she is always present next to him. But she rarely utters a word. Nor does she smile ever.

There is something Sphinx-like about this mysterious lady called Sonia. Gandhi's Italian-born wife. Because so little is known about her, and because she is so highly visible, there is for ever a great deal of speculation about her.

"I just don't like being in the limelight," she declared in the interview she gave to an Indian woman journalist over three years ago.

Being a prime minister's wife, this is not always easy. But Sonia does her best to keep her private life out of the media's reach. This may be one reason why she gets written about a good deal in the gossip columns of the ever-inquisitive newspapers and magazines.

In early December, she crash-landed on the front pages for no fault of hers. In Lucknow, the capital of India's largest and politically most crucial state of Uttar Pradesh, members belonging to the ruling Congress Party (of which her husband is the president) celebrated Sonia's 42nd birthday with a great deal of fanfare and enthusiasm.

Prodded by Bhaskar Pandey, a former member of the Uttar Pradesh legislative assembly, the state unit's Congress chief Balram Singh Yadav dashed off a circular last month to all district and city chiefs of the party, asking them to celebrate Dec. 6 as women's uplift day to mark Sonia Gandhi's birthday.

Yadav, Pandey and some other Congress leaders organised a glit-



Sonia and Rajiv Gandhi

tering function in Lucknow and exhausted all the adjectives in the dictionary to praise Sonia: "A great leader's great wife," "Kasturba Gandhi's rightful heir" (Kasturba was the wife of Mahatma Gandhi, the man who fought for India's independence and is revered as the father of the nation), "India's most important daughter-in-law," and so on.

Presiding over the function, Yadav declared that since she is the "respected wife of a respected leader," her birthday should be celebrated all over the country.

A female party functionary even composed a poem in Sonia's praise and recited it at the function. While party workers appreciated the effort by wildly applauding the poetess, the poem's reproduction in a national daily on its front page caused much amusement all around and embarrassment to Gandhi and his wife.

Written in the style of a court jester the poem is addressed to Sonia. The poetess asks her "Usba kahun ya Ganga tumko?" (Shall I call you the Bright Morning or the Holy Ganga?)

Bhaskar Pandey calls himself "an ardent devotee of the Nehru-Gandhi clan," and has been conducting a vociferous campaign, demanding that Sonia be made the President of the Congress Party.

Pandey, who is obviously hoping to stage a political comeback by singing Sonia's praises, began his campaign two years ago by distributing a leaflet throughout north India.

His pamphlet put forth his arguments thus: "The struggle for

the development and security of the country and the fight against extremism and terrorism are safe in the able and powerful hands of Rajiv Gandhi. But, for all this, it is necessary that the prime minister gets enough time to devote to the problems of the country.

"Fortunately for this country, in Sonia Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi has a wife who is admired all over the country. Her personality has endeared herself to millions of people... That is why, we request Gandhi to allow his wife to join active politics so that she may be a fitting replacement for the brilliant leadership of Indira Gandhi and shower the people of India with the same love and affection as Indira Gandhi."

### No political aspirations

A similar demand was also made from Bihar, yet another crucial state in the Hindi heartland. But Rajiv Gandhi has made it clear several times since then that his wife has no plans to enter politics. "She is not even a member of the Congress Party," he has said.

But Gandhi's statements about his wife are not being taken seriously. The reason is simple. During his lifetime, Rajiv's grandfather and first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had often said that his daughter Indira Gandhi had no political ambitions. When Indira Gandhi was asked about her younger son Sanjay Gandhi in the 1970s, she used to say the same thing. After his death in a plane crash in 1980, elder son Rajiv was brought into the Lok Sabha from Sanjay's parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh. Amethi. Rajiv too had initially proclaimed that he had no political ambitions either.

Meanwhile, speculation persists that Sonia may be fielded from the Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha constituency against Rajiv's fourth cousin Arun Nehru in next year's general election. Nehru wielded great power as a junior minister in Rajiv's cabinet initially. Last year, Gandhi threw him out. Nehru has now joined forces with opposition leader Vishwanath Pratap Singh and is hoping to oust Gandhi and his Congress Party from power in the upcoming



Sonia Gandhi

ing parliamentary election.

The funny thing about Sonia's heavily publicised birthday celebrations in Lucknow was that it was celebrated on the wrong day. Apparently, her birthday falls on Dec. 9. Since the Dec. 6 episode annoyed Rajiv and his publicity-shy wife, nobody in Lucknow dared to do anything on Dec. 9.

Sonia was 17 and Rajiv 20 when the two first met at Cambridge in England. When she began accepting his courtship, she did not know who he was. She recalls: "It was only after a long time that he told me he was Indira Gandhi's son."

Indira Gandhi was Lal Bahadur Shastri's Information and Broadcasting Minister at that time. On a visit to London, she met Sonia and approved her as Rajiv's bride. The two were married here in February 1968. They now have two teenage children: Rahul and Priyanka. She took Indian citizenship in 1982.

Sonia learnt Hindi with a tutor's help. Besides, that was the language Indira Gandhi insisted on the members of her family

speaking at the dining table. She is quite fluent in it and even makes speeches in that language whenever she visits her husband's parliamentary constituency.

So far, she has chosen to be her husband's silent companion. She has not sought to use her position as India's first lady to undertake any major assignment. However, she is known to help protocol officials choose gifts to be presented to visiting dignitaries. Last month, she attended a meeting of distinguished women for a discussion with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's intellectual wife, Raisa.

Sanjay Gandhi's widow Maneka has criticised Sonia for not emulating other first ladies like Eleanor Roosevelt, Nancy Reagan and Eva Peron. Says Maneka: "Unfortunately, our first lady has chosen to trivialise her position. Her activities are confined to shopping, eating in restaurants around the country and abroad and scowling at television."

But, we may be in for a surprise or two pretty soon, though — Arab News, Jeddah.

## Japan starts to get serious about plastic pollution

By Aya Takada  
Reuters

TOKYO — Swamped by difficult-to-dispose-of rubbish, Japan is joining the list of countries trying to stop the environmental disruption caused by the overuse of plastic packaging.

Japan is not yet in the same league as Italy, which has set a deadline of 1991 for the use of bio-degradable plastics only for wrapping, or the United States, where more than 10 states have banned use of plastic in bottles, wrapping, shopping bags and the like.

But it is starting to take the problem seriously. So seriously that the powerful Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) is getting in on the act, launching a pilot project to develop a suitable bio-degradable plastic.

"We may need to take those kind of measures (as in Italy and the United States) in the near future," said Yuji Tokumasa, an MITI official.

Yoshiharu Doi, assistant professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, said commercial production of bioplastic had not started anywhere, even in Italy, although the British Chemical Company ICI planned to start mass production of bioplastic in 1990.

According to MITI and statistics from the plastic waste management institute, plastic resin production last year in Japan amounted to 10 million tonnes, 10 per cent of world output.

Five million tonnes of that was thrown away, 55 per cent by households, the rest by industries.

"Only 600,000 tonnes of plastic wastes generated by industry were recycled into plastic products or plastic materials," said Koetsu Haga, an institute official.

According to a Tokyo municipal government survey, the city will run out of landfill sites for plastic wastes by 1996 if the wastes continue to accumulate at the current pace.

MITI plans to research three methods of producing biodegradable plastic: from natural polymers such as cellulose and starch, from micro-organisms that can

produce plastic within their own cells and from Amino Acid or saccharide through a fermentation process.

### Bioplastics

Tokumasa said MITI eventually hoped to use bioplastics to make products that are usually discarded after one use, such as wraps, containers, trays and bottles.

A MITI laboratory is already conducting basic research and has succeeded in producing a plastic sheet by mixing several kinds of polysaccharide solutions and then dehydrating them.

"The polysaccharide plastic can be resolved into soil in one to 12 months, depending on its ingredients," said Jun Hosokawa, chief researcher at the MITI laboratory.

"It's twice as strong as petrochemical plastic, but its production cost is now about five times higher," Hosokawa said.

So far bioplastics have had very limited use in Japan. A biodegradable plastic recently developed jointly by Sony Corporation, Ajinomoto Company and

MITI, for instance, is used as a vibrator in luxury headphones marketed by Sony at \$2,880.

"Bio-degradable plastic will be used as a value-added product, but is unlikely to be a substitute for petrochemical plastic due to its high production cost," Haga said.

"A more effective way to solve the problem may be to increase the number of incineration facilities equipped with noxious-gas removers so that all plastic wastes that can't be recycled can be incinerated," he said.

Fusako Kamaki, a member of the Japanese housewives alliance, who has been organising a consumer movement against plastic pollution, doubts the effectiveness of the MITI project.

"The way to solve the plastic pollution problems is to reduce the amount of plastic waste," Kamaki said. "We have to make manufacturers and distributors stop excessive and unnecessary use of plastic films and containers."

"Too much plastic is used for wrapping and packing that consumers don't really need. It's like paying for trash."

## We learn from bygone pollution

A DETAILED account of the findings of 20th-century scientists probing the contents of mediaeval cesspits may not provide the most wholesome reading over a tasty lunch.

This article therefore offers an early warning to those with sensitive stomachs that environmental archaeology — a discipline now well-established in several West European universities — is not a subject for the squeamish.

Yet those engaged in the delicate task of sifting the spoor of humanity have been able to draw a much clearer picture of environmental history, and have shown its relevance to the ecological problems of the modern age. Our ancestors, it seems, were just as capable as modern man of causing environmental disasters.

The level of lead pollution in today's automotive world is a matter of serious concern to environmentalists. But the problem is by no means new. Bone analysis of mediaeval skeletons has revealed that people in the Middle Ages were exposed to levels of lead pollution even higher than those of the 1980s.

They were believed to have been poisoned by their own sweet tooth: lead additives were long used as food sweeteners, and lead pollution did not decline until new sweeteners were found.

Noxious smells arising from industrial processes are another modern environmental com-

plaint. Yet 20th-century industry may emerge with the aroma of jasmine compared with the bardships inflicted on mediaeval communities by the curers of skins and hides.

Not only did tanners use urine to remove hairs and fish oil to grease hides, thus making terrible smells, but they also dumped waste products on roadsides and in rivers, causing epidemics.

The banishment of tanners to remote town-limit outskirts was an early example of legislative actions to curb environmental pollution.

Much more comprehensive measures were taken in Sicily in the 13th century by Emperor Frederick II. He decreed that in the interests of public hygiene animal carcasses and waste were not to be dumped inside city limits.

To keep the air fresh, hemp and flax were only to be watered away from settlements. And to protect drinking water and fish, certain herbs were not to be thrown into lakes or rivers.

Breaches of these laws carried severe penalties, including a year's forced labour in chains.

The modern world has often known to its cost the ecological consequences of development. Deforestation, soil erosion, drought and floods have been among many disasters this century — Lion features.

## Men's fashions in 1989

Patrick Olivier

MEN'S ready-to-wear fashions in 1989 recall the Revolution. This is hardly surprising and fashion designers should take off their hats to the men of 1789.

First of all, there is, of course, the strong return of the aristocratic frilled shirt, shirts with trompe-l'oeil waistcoats (to stay cooler in summer), spotted tie which can be folded like an accordion with the help of pleats, shirts with pointed collars for evening-wear, white for traditionalists and black for those in the swim, worn with a small muslin or silk scarf tied around the neck (by Mugler).

With the aristocratic fashions, dinner-jackets are in, with the general trend going to the dressed-up look in formal wear. Dinner-jackets go from black ones revealing glimpses of the back (Roelli Testa), to white admiral-type dinner-jackets (Lucien Fong) and include skirted dinner-jackets which tie like a wrap (Kenzo). Ties are definitely out. Dinner-jackets are worn over white polo-shirts or silk T-shirts (Dupont), as are the strict double-breasted suits by Dior.

The popular side of the Revolution is revealed by the "sans-culottes," or rather the arrival of shorts which will be the star items of men's clothing next summer with shorts suits (Daniel Hechter), comfortable jersey shorts with bomber jackets (Tarlazzi) or loose white shorts worn over pilots' shirts (Hermès).

The Revolution remains the theme with Saint-Laurent. He makes full use of the revolutionary rosette and the three colours. Shirts are thus blue, white and red and there are rosette brooches to wear on lapels.

The Revolution also recalls the Ancient Régime and so coats of arms are back in vogue. They will be really in, next summer. Kenzo has designed a royal crown. Cerruti has an emblem. Hermès (a capital H), Hechter (CHYC) and Castelbajac (JCC and a crown),

everyone is jumping on the hand-wagon with emblems and pseudo-coats of arms. If you actually have a real coat of arms of your own, now is the time to have it embroidered on a crewneck tee-shirt worn under your suit.

Kenzo brings a touch of exoticism to menswear in 1989, with tee-shirts covered in hydrangeas and pirate pants. Romanticism comes from Lagerfeld with loosely tied bows and straw hats. Hats are also back with Lanvin who

has opted for Spanish-style with Andalusian frills and hats.

Fashion also means fun and laughter. It means serious work, but also the art of not taking oneself too seriously. An art illustrated by Jean-Paul Gaultier, the unruly hero of ready-to-wear fashions. His fashion-show at the Olympia auditorium was full of bursting, like for an opening night, for his parody of the western with all the possible deliciousness on the theme of cowboys and

indians, the goodies and the bad-dies: with hints of Tarzan and Michael Jackson.

Whether it be for men's or women's fashions, Paris designers are as inventive as ever. This year, their creations were particularly successful. Dressed by them, men were as beautiful "as trucks," to take up an expression very much in vogue in France at the moment.

L'actualite en France



In a relaxed mood, by Hermes



Ready to go out on the town by Hechter

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## Another shekel devaluation

## Israel unveils austerity plan

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel devalued the shekel by nearly seven per cent against the dollar Sunday and unveiled an economic austerity programme designed to lower inflation and spur domestic growth.

Finance Minister Shimon Peres told a news conference he would slash a billion dollars from the government budget and reduce interest rates, subsidies on basic goods and workers' cost of living compensation.

"This is a serious attempt to turn the economy toward growth,

import, export, industry, to economic independence," Peres told reporters after a cabinet meeting approved his programme.

"These are the first steps in a positive direction that we must follow," he said.

Earlier the Bank of Israel

announced it had devalued the shekel for the second time in less than a week.

The new rate against the dollar was set at about 1.80, a devaluation of around 6.7 per cent. The shekel was last devalued Tuesday by some five per cent to 1.68 to the dollar.

A bank spokesman said the exact rate would depend on world markets which open Tuesday.

The bank also devalued the shekel by 7.4 per cent against a basket of currencies, to 1.948 from a rate of 1.8038 set last Tuesday.

In the past week speculators expecting devaluation have drained more than \$300 million of hard currency reserves by selling the shekel.

Cuts of between 12 per cent and 26 per cent in subsidies on milk, eggs, meat, bread and gasoline also took effect Sunday.

Peres, faced with Israel's worst economic slowdown since 1982, hopes to reduce 17 per cent annual inflation to single digits and also spur investment in ailing industry.

## Key points

The key points in his programme included:

- Holding the national deficit this year to 1987-88 levels by cutting a billion dollars from the government budget.
- A cumulative devaluation that has sent the shekel nearly 12 per cent lower against the dollar.
- Lowering interest rates to encourage capital investment.
- Sharp cuts in subsidised goods

and lowering the rate of workers' compensation for rises in the consumer price index.

Development and reemployment programmes, including investment in research and development for industry.

"Public spending is the main factor in inflation. Cutting it back will encourage growth and will reduce the government's role in the economy," Peres told reporters.

But he has already met opposition to his plan from Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin who insists the military cannot withstand any cuts. The housing and education ministries have said the same.

Peres, grilled for an hour by local reporters after laying out his plan, told a persistent questioner on cuts in workers' salaries: "What matters is the value of the shekel, not the number of them."

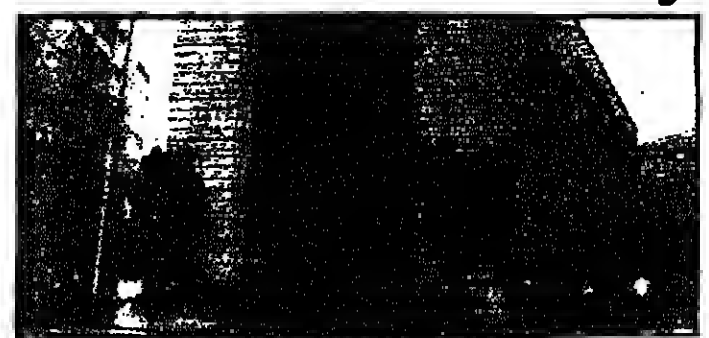
To stop speculation, the Bank of Israel Friday banned sales of foreign currency until Tuesday.

Gross domestic product rose one per cent in 1988, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. A year-old Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has contributed to the economic sluggishness.

Israel announced Friday it was scrapping customs duties on a range of goods from Europe and the United States in compliance with free trade agreements.

But it immediately raised purchase tax on cars by 10 per cent to an average of 110 per cent, preventing any gains for consumers.

## Tokyo stock market records best activity



The Tokyo Stock Exchange building

LONDON (R) — "Financial markets ended 1988 in better heart than they began it although they may soon be prey again to the anxieties that nagged them after the crash of '87."

Economists said a rally in shares might be hit if governments have to put up interest rates again to brake inflation or, in the case of the United States, to stop a new run on the dollar.

The dollar ended 1988 stronger than it began the year.

Last Jan. 4 it fell to all-time lows at 1.5615 Deutschmarks and 120.20 yen. But later it held above those values to end in London last Friday, around 1.77 marks and 125 yen.

"I think now we have good, realistic exchange rates and I hope they will stay stable," said a U.S. Federal Reserve Board (central bank) governor, Robert Heller, at year's end.

But dealers wondered how far central banks would go on buying the dollar to prop it up if there is a new flow of "hot" money out of it because of investor doubts about the ability of the United States to cut its huge trade and budget deficits.

The New York and London stock markets suffered for much of 1988 from investor jitters after the trauma of the "Black Monday" crash in October 1987.

Tokyo, the biggest market, surged at year-end to an all-time high on the Nikkei average at 30,159 points, more than 40 per cent above the low it touched during the crash.

"One point about Japan is that they save so much and simply have so much to invest," said Ian Harwood at London brokerage Warburg Securities.

By contrast, although Wall Street's Dow Jones industrial average ended Friday not far off its 1988 high at 2,711.5, it remains well below its peak of 2,711 set in August 1987 and is only about 25 per cent up since the crash.

On the London stock market, the FTSE index of 100 blue chip

companies closed the year at 1,793.1. This was only about 14 per cent up from the crash.

London shares have been depressed by sharply rising British interest rates as the government has struggled to halt an inflationary boom in consumer spending, and analysts do not see much life in them until fund managers and small investors are sure that interest rates will not rise above the present 13 per cent.

In New York, brokerage analysts see the Dow wavering early in 1989 when U.S. interest rates are rising, but a strong recovery later in the year.

But if incoming President George Bush fails to persuade markets that he can act on the U.S. deficits and the dollar slides again, U.S. stocks and bonds could also tumble, brokerage analysts say.

Trading volume in shares remained low in New York and was 45 per cent down on pre-crash levels in London, jobs were lost in finance in both centres.

Tokyo, however, reported record annual stock exchange turnover in 1988.

The year saw appreciable investor interest in continental European stocks. Stock markets in France, where the Paris CAC index gained 51 per cent during the year, West Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands ended last week at 1988 highs. Sweden's bourse ended at an all-time high.

Some other markets had a sizzling 1988. Taiwan's index soared more than 275 per cent on a speculative wave, but dropped sharply when the government announced a new capital gains tax.

The Sao Paulo index was helped by better-than-expected company profits to a gain of 156 per cent on the year, even though Brazil, the biggest Third World debtor, had virtually no economic expansion and 933 per cent inflation.

Most markets reopen Tuesday after the New Year break.

## Iranian premier presents \$55b budget

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iranian Prime Minister Hussein Musavi Sunday presented an annual budget of 3856.1 billion rials (\$55.08 billion) to parliament, the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported.

Musavi said in his budget address he would soon present a separate five-year economic development plan, said the agency, which is monitored in Nicosia.

The five-year plan is apparently intended to cover the vast reconstruction Iran is expected to

undertake to rebuild its devastated cities and economy, ravaged by the eight-year war with Iraq.

IRNA quoted Musavi as saying that the new budget was presented with minimum changes, compared to that of the current year, so that the Majlis, or parliament, could spend more time on the projected five-year plan.

The new budget is for the year 1368 of the Iranian calendar, which starts March 21, 1989. IRNA reported that the budget expenditure is broken up into

3050.9 billion rials (\$43.58 billion) for current expenditure, and 805.2 billion rials (\$11.5 billion) for development.

Total expenditure was only 3.2 per cent up compared with the current year, IRNA reported.

It quoted Musavi as saying that expenditure on education, health and social security was given priority, with an allocation of 37 per cent out of the total.

He added that in the economic sector water resources and agriculture were given priority, with a budget allocation 10.5 per cent higher than the current year.

IRNA did not give a figure for this allocation.

Musavi said that revenue from direct taxation had increased from 48.8 per cent for the current budget to 61.1 per cent for the new year.

The increase could play an outstanding role in the just distribution of the country's income, IRNA quoted him as adding.

In his budget address Musavi outlined in detail the government's policies on political, economic and social issues, IRNA reported, but did not elaborate further.

## Venezuela freezes debt repayments

CARACAS (R) — President Jaime Lusinchi, denouncing foreign creditors as selfish and unreliable, Saturday announced Venezuela was suspending principal payments on nearly all of its \$30.3 billion foreign debt, the fourth-highest in the developing world.

Lusinchi said in a televised speech that a fall in the price of oil, Venezuela's main export, combined with excessively high interest rates forced him to suspend payments beginning Jan. 17, two weeks before he hands over power to President-elect Carlos Andres Perez.

Foreign banks, some of whom were surprised by the timing of the decision on the New Year's holiday weekend, drew comfort from the fact the suspension affected only payments on the principal amounts and not the interest.

"Suspending principal payments is the least bad thing a

government can do with the debt," one banker said. "It's not like suspending interest payments, a move which actually reduces the earnings of banks."

The suspension applies to all private foreign bank debt contracted up to 1985 but excludes an estimated \$1.33 billion loaned by private foreign banks after 1985. It also excludes loans from governments and official agencies, bonds and certain other debt instruments.

Finance Minister Hector Hurtado said the affected debt was part of a 1986 rescheduling agreement modified in 1987 which called for payment of \$700 million in principal in 1989 and repayment of the total \$21.3 billion within 14 years.

Since Latin America's debt crisis began in 1982, all major regional debtors have virtually stopped repaying principal to foreign private banks though

their bank accords commit them to pay interest.

Venezuela, long the richest country in the region, has been the exception.

Seeking to harness its reputation as a model debtor worthy of new loans, it has repaid \$9.5 billion in principal to private foreign creditors since 1984, more than any other debtor in the region.

President Lusinchi said Venezuela had in good faith maintained the payments on the strength of a promise by foreign banks to issue a flow of fresh loans.

He criticised the banks for failing to honour that pledge and accused them of selfishly failing to understand the extent of the debt burden to Venezuela in light of the oil price slump, which has seen the price of oil drop 48.5 per cent over the last five years.

Debt service in 1988, officially

estimated at \$5.3 billion, absorbed 65 per cent of oil export earnings, Central Bank President Mauricio Garcia said Saturday in defending Lusinchi's decision.

"This was unsustainable," he told reporters.

Some foreign bankers said the government decided to suspend principal payments because it had to conserve foreign exchange needed to back letters of credit for imports.

The only alternative would have been to start selling off Venezuela's estimated \$4.7 billion in gold holdings, but this would have been a potentially explosive step, they said.

About 99 per cent of Venezuela's foreign debt is owed to private creditors. Before Lusinchi's announcement, the finance ministry had projected principal payments next year at \$2.3 billion.

## Reagan puts trade pact with Canada into effect

PALM SPRINGS, California (R) — President Reagan took the final actions Saturday needed for a major trade agreement with Canada to take effect as scheduled on Jan. 1 and telephoned his congratulations to Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, the White House said.

"Together our governments have set an example for the world on how eliminating trade barriers can benefit all peoples," Reagan told Mulroney, according to the White House.

The accord establishes the world's largest free trade zone between the two nations, which already are each others' closest trading partners, and sets up a framework for the resolution of future trade disputes.

The free trade agreement will phase out all tariffs on U.S.-Canadian trade over a 10-year period and will also move toward the elimination of reduction of non-tariff barriers to trans-border commerce between the two countries.

Trade between the United States and Canada totalled nearly \$150 billion in 1988, the White House said.

"The free trade agreement represents a signal accomplishment in the long history of U.S.-Canada relations," White House spokesman Roman Popadiuk said in a statement released here, where Reagan is taking a working vacation at the home of friend

and publishing magnate Walter Annenberg.

"It will strengthen the industrial base of our two countries and will demonstrate to the multilateral system that it is possible to bring down trade barriers in an equitable and mutually beneficial manner," Popadiuk said.

The agreement was given final approval by the Canadian parliament only Friday. President Reagan's order Saturday implemented the accord on behalf of the United States.

Legislation to put the agreement into effect was cleared by the U.S. Congress in September but approval by the Canadian parliament was in doubt until the conclusion of last month's elections in Canada.

The accord had been a principal focus of the Canadian balloting, with Mulroney's opponents charging that it would mean U.S. domination of Canadian cultural life.

"The agreement will also enhance energy security, improve the investment climate and significantly increase opportunities in the services sector, including financial services," Popadiuk said.

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Trade between the United States and Canada totalled



Simon Ståhl

CLAPPING HER HANDS IS VERY GOOD FOR HER CIRCULATION, PET

NICETRY



# India to withdraw two battalions from Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (R) — India will withdraw two battalions of troops from Sri Lanka in the next few days at the request of the island's President-elect Ranasinghe Premadasa, the Indian high commission (embassy) said Sunday.

High Commissioner Jyotindra Nath Dixit said the number of soldiers withdrawn would be between 2,000 and 3,000.

There are more than 50,000 Indian troops in Sri Lanka policing an Indo-Sri Lankan Pact aimed at ending a Tamil rebellion in the north.

Premadasa, the incumbent prime minister, will be sworn in as president Monday at a Buddhist temple in the central city of Kandy.

Indian troops started arriving in Sri Lanka in July 1987, hours after President Junius Jayewardene and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed the con-

troverial pact.

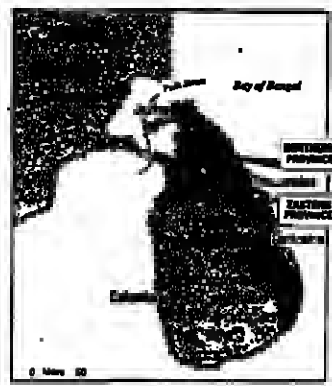
The agreement, criticised by the opposition as a sell-out to India, called on Tamil separatist guerrillas to lay down their arms in return for limited autonomy for minority Tamils living in the north and east.

While several rebel groups accepted the pact, it was rejected by the powerful Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who began fighting the Indian troops.

Dixit said Premadasa had told him Dec. 21, two days after the presidential election, that "the government of India should consider making a public announcement, before he assumes charge

Jan. 2, about the withdrawal of Indian troops in a phased manner depending on the situation on the ground."

Dixit said the suggestion for a phased withdrawal and other matters regarding the pact were discussed by Jayewardene and Gandhi Saturday during their



visit to Islamabad for the South Asian leaders' meeting.

Following these discussions India had decided to make the announcement Sunday about the withdrawal simultaneously in Colombo and New Delhi.

The statement said that with the setting up recently of a semi-autonomous provincial council in the north and east and the devolution of powers to the council some troops had been withdrawn since the end of November.

"Another two battalions will be withdrawn in the coming few days," Dixit said quoting the statement.

The statement said that as the situation in the north and east improves further and as the fighting potential of the rebels is reduced "the government (of India) is hopeful of making further withdrawals in consultation with the Sri Lankan government."

## Takeshita takes blame for cabinet resignations

TOKYO (AP) — Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita said Sunday that he is to blame for the resignations of four of his cabinet ministers, two of them because of links to a political scandal during the last month.

He also said at an annual New Year's news conference that he hoped Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev would come to Tokyo this year for the first visit to Japan ever by a top Soviet leader.

Takeshita's cabinet has taken a beating in recent weeks despite the prime minister's success last month in winning parliament's approval for comprehensive tax-reform legislation.

Justice Minister Takashi Hasegawa resigned Friday — only three days after he was appointed

in a cabinet shakeup — after it was revealed he had received political donations for years from a company involved in a stock-trading scandal.

Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa stepped down in early December after repeatedly changing his explanation of a close side's purchase of unlisted shares of a company's real-estate subsidiary at bargain prices.

The director of the National Land Agency stepped down in May after he created a controversy by claiming Japan was not responsible for World War II, and the chief of the defence agency resigned to take responsibility for a navy submarine's collision with a fishing boat. Thirty people died in the crash.

"I am solely to blame for four ministers resigning," Takeshita said. "Somehow we have to regain the public's trust."

In foreign affairs, Takeshita pledged to keep U.S.-Japanese relations at the centre of his foreign policy but said he would expand Japan's diplomacy toward the Soviet Union, Asia and the Pacific region.

He said he would focus attention on increasing Japan's contributions to world peace, cultural exchanges and economic assistance.

Tokyo and Moscow never signed a peace treaty officially ending hostilities after World War II, largely because of their territorial dispute over a group of Soviet-held islands off northern

Japan.

Soviet Foreign Minister Edvard Shevardnadze visited Japan last month, and while the two sides did not reach agreement on the disputed islands, they agreed to discuss the issue further.

"I believe the atmosphere is ripe for a visit, and I sincerely hope Gorbachev will make a visit to Japan within the year," Takeshita told the news conference at his official residence.

Takeshita said he was looking forward to an early meeting with U.S. President-elect George Bush in Washington, but said it would be difficult this month because of the two countries' political schedules.

## Mikulic ostracised by Yugoslav press

BELGRADE (AP) — The failure of Premier Branko Mikulic to halt Yugoslavia's economic decline and implement fundamental economic reforms caused his government's downfall, Yugoslav news commentators said Saturday.

It was the first time a Yugoslav government resigned after the communists took power at the end of World War II.

Mikulic's cabinet tendered its collective resignation to the state presidency Friday in reaction to mounting criticism of its handling of a mounting crisis.

Inflation has soared to 250 per cent and the foreign debt has mounted to \$21 billion.

"After being welcomed 2½ years ago with exceptional affection and irrepressible optimism, Mikulic was sent off with total disappointment," said an editorial in Vecernje Novosti, the country's largest-circulation daily.

"How could a government which continuously lost all its battles... keep on vegetating for so long?" asked the Slovenian Delo newspaper.

Delo also sharply attacked Mikulic personally, saying he had been a "lackey" to Yugoslavia's undeveloped republics and the country's armed forces.

Mikulic, a reputed hardliner and former Communist Party leader in the central Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia, enjoyed a reputation as a competent trouble-shooter when he was named premier in 1986.

But his subsequent policies proved incapable of reconciling



Mikulic

the often diverse economic interests of the country's developed and underdeveloped regions.

The relatively affluent Northern Republics of Slovenia and Croatia already have a free-market orientation and favour radical economic and political changes.

But the depressed southern regions, fearful of the consequences of mass unemployment, continue to rely heavily upon federal subsidies to keep them afloat.

The government essentially follows guidelines set by the party bodies that must themselves struggle for a consensus before any policies can be implemented.

Since the Mikulic government took office in 1986, the country's inflation rate has trebled and living standards have plummeted.

In 1988 alone, the average monthly salary dropped from the equivalent of \$105 to \$87, according to official statistics.

A record number of strikes amid a chorus of demands for fundamental political and economic changes also have plagued the government.

## World leaders exchange New Year messages

NEW YORK (R) — The leaders of the superpowers exchanged warm New Year's greetings as people around the world ushered in 1989.

President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev Saturday hailed the improved ties between their nations and voiced hopes that relations will continue to warm next year.

Other world figures, among them the Pope and the leaders of France, Nicaragua, Poland and South Korea, expressed hopes that 1989 would be a year of compassion and reconciliation.

On Saturday evening, hours after the clocks had struck 12 elsewhere in the world, New Yorkers took their noisemakers and champagne bottles to Times Square to wait for the white neon ball to drop, welcoming 1989 to the United States.

Pope John Paul, Saturday led a

service in Rome's Main Jesuit Church, the Baroque Church of Jesus, and called for more compassion for the homeless and AIDS victims in Rome.

In Seoul, South Korean president Roh Tae-woo said the two Koreas could tear down the "wall of confrontation" in 1989 and achieve reunification of the peninsula by the end of the century.

In Warsaw, Poland's Communist leader General Wojciech Jaruzelski said the need for national reconciliation was becoming more urgent and he left the door open for compromise with Solidarity.

French President Francois Mitterrand, in a speech from Strasbourg, seat of the European Parliament, urged the European Community to make 1989 a year of growth.

## Opposition demonstrators dispersed in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Police Saturday used tear gas to end a month-long opposition sit-in at a city hall in Campeche state.

News reports said several demonstrators were injured, missing or detained.

Meanwhile, in the michoacan state capital of Morelia, opposition activists voluntarily ended a sit-in, their second in a month, the government newspaper El Nacional said.

The demonstrations were part of a wave of election fraud protests by the left-of-centre National Democratic Front that have rippled across Mexico since the disputed July 6 presidential elections.

The government newspaper said nothing about the violence in

Campeche. But leading Mexico City papers such as Excelsior, El Universal and La Jornada ran the story on the front page.

They said police reportedly fired guns and tear gas grenades in the pre-dawn hours to rout demonstrators at the city hall in the small town of Candelaria.

The reports said opposition spokesmen reported a number of people were missing, arrested or injured in the police assault.

Excelsior said Candelaria residents reported seeing women and children fleeing down the street.

El Universal said some tried to seek refuge in a nearby church. Candelaria Mayor Enrique Razo Urbie told the Associated Press that one police officer suffered a minor gunshot wound and



A Santa Claus and a little Christmas tree were set up on top of the wall in front of the Leninakan library which was completely destroyed by the earthquake.

## Armenia's holiday season has never been so sad

MOSCOW (AP) — Toys, jam, clothes and other gifts poured into Armenia for survivors of the earthquake that killed an estimated 25,000 people, but the traditional New Year's spirit was missing, TASS reported.

"Thousands of people come these days to Yerevan hospitals and clinics bringing for the quake survivors toys, jams, fruits, sweets and clothes," the news agency said.

An International Red Cross official reported from Yerevan that volunteers made sure that all 4,500 hospitalised earthquake victims received traditional New Year's gifts.

A group of Armenian, British, Russian, Finnish and Hungarian

northwestern Armenia in the southern Soviet Union. A 40-day period of mourning was declared, so the traditional New Year's spirit was missing, TASS reported.

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Red Cross workers drove in a fleet of Australian, West German, and Soviet vehicles to help distribute the gifts, said George Reid of the League of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Dolls and Teddy bears were among the presents distributed to the children at Yerevan's traumatological hospital, Reid reported, while adult patients got gifts shipped in by the British Red Cross.

TASS said its reporter asked one boy whose mother was killed in the quake in the city of Spitak what he wanted from Father Frost, the mythical, bearded man who brings gifts during New Year's to Soviet citizens.

## Security Council disagrees on peace forces in Namibia

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Security Council failed Saturday to create the biggest U.N. peacekeeping force in 25 years as the United States, the Soviet Union and other powers clashed with the Non-Aligned Movement over the cost of the Namibia operation.

In an 11th-hour attempt to usher in the New Year with the latest U.N. peacekeeping success, the five permanent council members who will pay most of the bill tried to slash the cost of \$700 million for the 9,500-man force to oversee Namibia's transition to independence from South Africa.

But the Non-Aligned Movement, which has six members on the 15-nation council, opposed the move and said the force should not be reduced, to prevent possible interference in Namibian elections by South Africa.

After a week of negotiations and two days of heated consultations, the talks broke down Saturday afternoon as the council pre-

pared for a change in membership in 1989.

Negotiations were to continue next week on creating the peacekeeping force, the U.N. Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), which is to be in place before April 1.

It will be the biggest force since the 19,800-man U.N. contingent was deployed in the Congo from 1960 to 1964.

Besides the United States and the Soviet Union, the other permanent council members are Britain, China and France, all with veto power over any resolution. Other council members are Brazil, Italy, Japan, West Germany, Algeria, Argentina, Nepal, Senegal, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

It was the latest case of rare unity among the five permanent council members, especially between the Soviet Union and the United States, which now enjoy better relations.

U.S. Ambassador Patricia M. Byrne, deputy representative,

said the five permanent members were ready to adopt a resolution directing the secretary-general to "identify tangible cost-saving measures," in the force.

"We were ready to go," she said, "but then the non-aligned group presented new amendments." She did not specify them, but other diplomats said the amendments countered efforts at cost-cutting.

"There was not enough time to handle them on this New Year's Eve," Byrne said. "So we have to consider them Tuesday."

British Ambassador Sir Crispin Tickell told reporters after consultations, "It's a great tragedy that the rest of the council couldn't make the effort we made to vote for the resolution."

He said the Non-Aligned Movement wanted major changes "about how much money this is to cost and the basis on which it will take place." Their proposed changes, he said, would have "weakened the language" of cost-cutting.

## Chinese police break up African students protest

PEKING (R) — Hundreds of Chinese police armed with electric prods and batons stormed a guest house where African students had barricaded themselves, forcing some of them back to their campuses in the city Nanking.

African students contacted by telephone from Peking Sunday said that police beat some of the students before they were loaded on buses and taken away Saturday.

"We didn't want to go. Some students were beaten," said an African who asked not to be further identified. "I walked out

and I was not hit. Some of us had our hands up in the air."

Other students who had returned to their campuses said there were no reports of serious injuries but police appeared to single out eight or nine people alleged to be involved in a campus clash on Christmas Eve.

Students said that Saturday afternoon about 300 police and plainclothes security men moved into the guest house near the east China city of Nanking where African and other foreign students had been since Monday.

The Africans had been brought there Monday after violence

flared on three Nanking campuses where they had been studying.

"They divided us into small groups," said a student. "We were kept waiting outside while they told us about the law and our poor behaviour."

Five hours later they were put on buses. About 20 have returned to their universities but the whereabouts of more than 100 others was unclear.

A provincial government official said that some of the students were still at the guest house.

Liang Ruiji, head of Hehai University, had described the guest house as "an independent king-

dom" where Africans had refused to let Chinese enter. He called on the government to deal with the situation.

In the worst incident, more than 2,000 students, some shouting "down with black devils" attacked African at Hehai University a week ago after a clash at a university dance.

Thirteen people were injured in the clash, according to the official Chinese media.

Chinese students took to the street in four days of protests last week, demanding stern punishment for Africans involved.

## Ortega: Reagan terrorist, obsessed

MANAGUA (AP) — President Daniel Ortega blamed the United States, capitalism, and hurricane Joan for Nicaragua's shattered economy in his year-end speech to the nation Saturday and rejected new talks with the rebels.

Ortega also was quoted Saturday as saying astronomical inflation will get worse before it gets better.

Nicaragua suffers 21,000 per cent inflation, one of the highest rates in the world, Ortega was quoted as saying. "While we are in war, the inflation will continue to rise," Ortega told Barricada,

the official newspaper of the ruling Sandinista Party.

U.S.-backed rebels known as contras have been trying to oust the leftist government of Nicaragua since 1981, two years after the revolution in which the Sandinistas took power from the rightist Somoza family dictatorship.

Most of the Sandinistas' promises of a more just society remain unfulfilled because of poor economic management and the war, which Ortega says has killed 29,113 people and done more than \$12 billion in economic damage.

A cease-fire and cutoff of U.S. military aid to the rebels have reduced fighting to small skirmishes most of this year, but talks on a permanent peace broke down in September.

In his nationally broadcast speech to diplomats, state workers, and others at a military school in the capital, Ortega rejected the latest contra proposals for peace talks, including one for a January round in Washington.

"This is an unbending monster," he said of the rebels. "It gives off a stench in all directions. It tosses out one reeking proposal here

and another there. One can't tell which is from the United States, which ultimately is the one that arms this monster and doesn't know where to bury it or how to bury it."

But he also said the Sandinistas were unilaterally extending the cease-fire another month and that Nicaragua is ready to "look for ways to coexist with the enemies of the revolution."

Ortega ended his two-hour speech with a tirade against U.S. President Ronald Reagan, describing him as a "terrorist" and "obsessed."

## WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

### Hirohito's condition worsens

TOKYO (AP) — Emperor Hirohito's condition took a turn for the worse Sunday, and his heir presided over the annual New Year's ceremony at the Imperial palace. Palace officials said the emperor discharged a "substantial amount of blood" through his bowels early Sunday and doctors administered 400 cubic centimetres of blood in a transfusion.

### Eritreans agree to negotiate

KHARTOUM (AP) — An Eritrean rebel group has agreed to talk unconditionally with the Ethiopian government about ending a 26-year-old rebellion against the Marxist-led east African government, the Sudanese newspaper Al Siyassa reported Sunday. Omar Al Reyb, executive committee chairman of the Eritrean Liberation Front-United Organisation, said Sudan proposed the negotiations after a recent visit to Khartoum by an Ethiopian delegation, Al Siyassa said. The paper quoted Reyb as saying he met Saturday with Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi about the idea.

### Marcos remains in hospital

HONOLULU (AP) — Former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos is expected to stay in the hospital for at least a few more days, said a hospital spokeswoman. Marcos, 71, who is being treated for congestive heart failure, was reported in satisfactory condition Saturday at St. Francis Medical Centre.

### Kim Il Sung invites Roh

TOKYO (AP) — North Korean President Kim Il Sung Sunday invited South Korean President Roh Tae-woo and six other political and religious leaders from Seoul to a political conference in the near future, Pyongyang's official media reported. The Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo, said Kim proposed a "Political consultative meeting of leadership-level people from North and South" to discuss the reunification of Korea. Kim's proposal came in a New Year speech in which he did not name Roh but invited him as president of the governing democratic justice party.

### 100 injured at midnight

LONDON (AP) — As Big Ben struck midnight, an estimated 100,000 New Year's revelers jammed London's Trafalgar Square Sunday to ring in 1989, police said. Scotland Yard said the turnout was the largest since violent new year revels six years ago, when two women were killed in a surging crowd in the Central London Square, the traditional focal point of celebrations in the capital. Police arrested 88 people for various public order offences.

### 3 poachers killed in Zimbabwe

HARARE (R) — Game wardens guarding Zimbabwe's dwindling black Rhino population killed three poachers in a shoot-out in the Zambezi valley Saturday, police said. A rifle and several rounds of ammunition were found at the scene and a fourth poacher escaped, they added.

## COLUMN

### Davis creates on film set

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Patience is the key to working with legendary actress Bette Davis, whose unexpected comings-and-goings on the set of the film "Wicked Stepmother" have created a stir, says the movie's producer-director. "She's 80 and you have to be patient with her because you do get a great performance and it is Bette Davis," Larry Cohen said. "Everything's amiable. She's coming back." Cohen said in an interview last week. Miss Davis left Los Angeles just as filming was beginning on "Wicked Stepmother." Besides, Cohen said of the stir caused by her departure, "any publicity is good publicity." "It was basically a health problem. If you're not feeling well and things are bothering you — like dental problems — it's hard to work. Now that that's been taken care of, she's coming back."

### Picasso museum to reopen March 1

PARIS (AP) — The Picasso museum, home for the past three years to nearly 3,500 works by Pablo Picasso, is closing to the public for two months for repairs, a museum spokesman said. The refurbished 17th century mansion, known as the Hotel Sale after one of its former owners, opened as a museum in 1985 with the world's largest collection of works by the Spanish master who died in 1973. The 203 paintings, 158 sculptures and 3,000 drawings were taken by the French government from Picasso's heirs in lieu of death taxes, along with works by Matisse, Cezanne, Braque and Renoir in the artist's private collection. A spokesman said that the repairs involved replacing the building's stone floors, which had proven "too porous and fragile," to handle traffic from some 40,000 visitors monthly. The museum is to reopen March 1.

### The Star Trek saga continues

LOS ANGELES (AP) — William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and other starship enterprise crew members gathered in Hollywood to toast completion of nearly all filming for the movie "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier." With only a few special-effects sequences left to be filmed, cast members sipped a mixture of champagne and green melon liqueur. Joining Shatner, who plays Captain James T. Kirk, and Nimoy, who plays Mr. Spock, were delectable Kelly (Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy), Walter Koenig (Ensign Pavel Chekov) and James Doohan (Engineer Montgomery "Scotty" Scott). The subtitle, "The Final Frontier," does not mean that it's the end of the voyages of the enterprise. Doohan says the actors have been signed up for "Star Trek VI," and that the producer's services have been enlisted all the way to "Star Trek VII."

### China screens sexy scenes

PEKING (AP) — Communist China's first officially approved movie with sex scenes has been screened to sell-out crowds in Canton, the China News Service said Tuesday. "Widows Village" is about the experiences of three young couples in a fishing village before and after the Communist victory in 1949. The film's director has recommended that children not watch it, the official report said. It said the movie "required some special scenes showing couples' lovemaking," but didn't elaborate on how graphic the scenes were or why they were necessary to the plot. It said the story dealt with the couples' experiences "under the influence of strange marriage customs," but gave no details.

### Woman to inhabit cave for 5 months

NEW MEXICO (AP) — An Italian researcher will spend the first five months of 1989 sealed in a cave without seeing or hearing another person in an experiment designed to simulate a long space flight. Stefania Folini, 27, a member of a research team based in Ancona, Italy, is to descend Sunday into lost cave in southeast Carlsbad, officials said. "It will be in complete isolation from the outside world," said Jim Goodbar, a cave specialist with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in Carlsbad. "Her only communication with the outside world will be via computer." The purpose of the experiment is to simulate a long space flight, said Ron Kerbo, a cave specialist for Carlsbad Caverns National Park. "What that does to you psychologically and physically is not known," he said.